Stourbridge
CHRONICLE

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Patients to be consulted over merger with health centre

BRANCH SURGERY FACING CLOSURE

Report by Dayna Farrington

PATIENTS are being asked to give their views over plans to close a GP surgery in Stourbridge and merge it with its sister practice.

Three Villages Medical Practice has launched a two-month consultation over its proposals to close the Wollaston surgery.

The closure would see the practice merged with Stourbridge Health and Social Care Centre.

In a letter to patients on the practice's website, bosses say: "After a great deal of thought and consideration, it is apparent that Wollaston is no longer able to operate effectively in modern general practice.

"We are proposing to close our branch surgery at Wollaston and bring all services together under one roof at Stourbridge Health and Social Care Centre (SHSCC)."

It added: "We will make it our aim to retain the elements that patients value from our smaller practice site and we, as a team, are confident that we will continue to provide the best possible service by consolidating all patient care at SHSCC providing better access to full nursing services, chronic disease management and minor surgery facilities.

"We would also like to assure you there will be no reduction in the number of appointments available."

Difficult

On the reasons behind the plans, the statement explained, was that working across two sites was 'increasingly difficult – communication, safety, team work'.

"Logistics of maintaining an efficient and safe service is increasingly challenging to achieve," it continued. "Practice budget does not allow us to effectively run two sites without compromises."

Paula Collins, practice manager, said: "We are planning to seek the views of our registered patient population. We are keen to understand the impact of this proposal before making a decision to submit an application to Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.

A public meeting will be held on August 8, at 7pm, at St James' Church, Wollaston. At www.3villages.co.uk there is an online survey.

TEAM ENSURE UNLUCKY 13 FOR TOBACCO CROOKS

Dudley trading standards officers, police and a tobacco detection dogs with a haul of illegal cigarettes seized from three premises

MORE than 150,000 illegal cigarettes and 1,000kg of tobacco were taken off Dudley's streets in 13 enforcement operations in one year.

The seizures took place at seven shops between April 2017 and March this year. Two prosecutions have since concluded with several more pending. The enforcement was part of a larger Trading Standards initiative by the Central England Trading Standards Authorities, recovering huge amounts of tobacco that would have resulted in a tax dodge of nearly £2 million.

The amount of illegal product seized has increased year on year, with the quantity of illicit cigarettes seized last year being almost 30 per cent more than a record figure the previous year. Crooks use sophisticated methods to hide the illegal goods, which means specialist tobacco sniffer dogs are required.

Councillor Ruth Buttery, Dudley Council's cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "Far from being a victimless crime, the availability of cheap cigarettes, undermines Government health policies. People may think they are getting a 'good deal' but they are actually supporting criminal gangs."

DEVELOPMENT

Concern over scrap metal process plant

A WASTE plant that would process 20,000 tons of scrap metal a month if built in Brierley Hill is facing strong opposition.

Worried residents say the proposed Brierley Hill Freight and Steel Terminal development – which would result in 1,100 lorry trips to and from the site in Moor Street every month – would be noisy and place too much strain on the roads.

Brierley Hill ward councillor Rachel Harris said: "I am very concerned about it. I don't think it's a good development for the area at all. It will be a deeply unpopular move if the council grant permission."

CRIME

Machete attack after street row

TWO men were left with serious injuries after a machete attack in Brierley Hill.

The pair were walking along High Street when an argument broke out between them and two people in a car.

Police confirmed the men were attacked with machetes in Hill Street and suffered serious injuries during the incident at around 10pm on July 22.

Police are urging anyone with information to call them on 101.

GOVERNMENT

Council is told to consider tax rise

COUNCIL tax could be raised in Dudley, following April's 4.5 per cent increase, so the authority can boost its coffers.

Bosses at Dudley Council have been warned by auditors that they should consider increasing how much they charge the borough's council taxpayers. This is due to concern over protecting frontline services.

The borough has had one of the lowest council tax rates in the West Midlands in recent years.

INSIDE

GLIMPSE INTO CASTLE'S PAST

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Long waits in ambulances at hospital

MORE than 600 patients were left waiting more than half an hour in ambulances outside a hospital in a month, new figures reveal.

A total of 603 people had to wait more than 30 minutes in ambulances outside Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital in May – an average of 20 a day.

The handover times saw a 60 per cent increase from the figures for April, which saw 240 patients had been left waiting in ambulances outside the hospital.

A spokesman for the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust said it faced a 10 per cent increase in the number of ambulance attendances in May, compared to the previous month. They added that the teams are working hard to ensure those who arrive by ambulance are seen, assessed and handed over as 'quickly and efficiently' as possible.

Also in May, 67 patients had to wait more than an hour in ambulances outside the hospital – compared to nine in April.

Karen Kelly, chief operating officer at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the hospital, said: "Our teams at the Dudley Group are working very hard to ensure patients who arrive by ambulance are seen and assessed then handed over as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"We saw more than 9,000 attendances at our emergency department in May 2018, which was a 10.4 per cent increase on attendances in April. We also saw an increase in the number of ambulance arrivals – an average 3,360 compared to 3,194 in April.

"We are also seeing an increase in emergency attendances among patients with complex needs and this has an impact on ambulance handover times.

"Patients requiring urgent clinical attention are always given priority to ensure they receive the care and treatment they need as soon as possible."

In March, a total of 288 people had to wait more than 30 minutes in ambulances outside Russells Hall Hospital – with 35 left for more than one hour.

MP demanding action over Russells Hall crisis

AN MP has held crisis talks with bosses at a hospital after several staff quit amid concerns over patient safety and bullying claims.

Ian Austin said he is becoming increasingly concerned by the claims emerging from Russells Hall in Dudley and wants the health regulator to investigate.

The Labour MP for Dudley North said he had spoken to Dudley NHS trust chiefs and requested a meeting with Care Quality Commission (CQC)and NHS Improvement bosses over the problems.

Several whistleblowers have spoken out about working conditions at Russells Hall. It is understood at least eight members of staff from the A&E department have quit in the last few weeks. A letter signed by medics was also sent to chiefs expressing a lack of confidence in their running of the hospital.

Worried

Mr Austin said he was worried the problems at Dudley's hospital 'go deeper' than NHS pressures from budget cuts.

He said: "Hospitals around the country are under huge pressure as a result of financial cutbacks to social care which mean patients are stuck in hospital, there's a recruitment crisis with 100,000 vacancies in the NHS, A&E departments have been in crisis this year and thousands of so-called non-urgent operations cancelled, but I am worried that the problems at Russells Hall go deeper than that and I have met the senior management team to raise my concerns. I and Dudley's other MPs are asking to meet the CQC and NHS Improvement to discuss the position at Russells Hall."

Hospital staff have raised concerns over 'bullying', 'patient safety' and 'professional conduct of the senior executives of the trust board'.

Bosses at the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall, have pledged to investigate the concerns raised and say retaining staff remains a 'key priority'.

Heatwave gives a glimpse into the past

Scorching sunshine has produced markings that experts say indicate where buildings once stood at Dudley Castle

MYSTERIOUS markings have appeared in Dudley Castle's courtyard and the phenomenon is down to the dry spell.

Scorching sunshine has brought out the markings, which history experts say indicate where buildings stood as far back as the 16th century.

Prominent 'parch marks' have been revealed in three areas of the castle grounds, showing the location of wall from the 1500s, an elaborate garden water feature from the early-1900s and a unknown building near the base of the keep.

Former castle keeper Adrian Durkin said: "I haven't seen the wall line across the far end of the courtyard for about 30 years.

"The wall would have enabled food and provisions to be bought to the kitchen without having to go through the main courtyard and is probably John Dudley (mid-1500s) in date. The large circular feature in the centre will be remembered by some as a garden feature but for the rest it is, of course, where the UFOs land! But it's the third marking near the base of the keep, which is a real mystery. I've never seen it before, we have not excavated the area and I don't know what it is."

Education Assistant Amy Hickman said: "It's all down to this exceptionally hot weather, which is causing history to re-emerge. These markings are like footprints from the past."

Conman's bid to get jail sentence cut is rejected

A CRUEL fraudster who tried to con money out of a vulnerable pensioner has failed in a bid to get his jail term cut. Terry Francis Collins was locked up for a year at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 22.

The 22-year-old admitted fraud after donning a hard hat and carrying a clipboard to bamboozle his elderly victim, London's Appeal Court heard.

Collins had turned up at the 82-year-old man's Halesowen home on November 8 last year. He asked the pensioner about work which had been done on his roof, for which he had paid in full. The conman claimed the victim owed tax for the work. He demanded £480 in VAT for a job that had cost just £650.

When the pensioner queried the amount, Collins said he would 'settle for £280' but the victim refused to pay up, though the elderly man, who has had triple bypass heart surgery, lived in fear after Collins said he would be back.

People had tried to trick him before and his daughter had seen a camera installed. Police were able to recognise Collins from the CCTV.

Lawyers for Collins, from Foster Way, High Green, Sheffield, argued that his jail term was far too harsh but Lord Justice Treacy, who was sitting with two others, dismissed the fraudster's appeal.

Passengers warned of Euston closure

PASSENGERS from the West Midlands planning to travel to London using Euston Station are warned the terminal will be closed to over three consecutive weekends this summer.

Euston will be shut as part of Network Rail's Upgrade Plan, which includes replacing ageing North Wembley junction, a major intersection on Europe's busiest mixed-use railway.

Rail chiefs say it is necessary to shut the line in order to carry out the work. They is will be done over August 18-19, August 25-27 (bank holiday weekend) and September 1-2.

The Euston shutdown will impact all services on the West Coast main line including trains serving Birmingham New Street, Birmingham International, Rugby and Coventry.

Date is set for town hall vegan festival

THE Stourbridge Vegan Festival will open on August 11 between 10am to 4pm at Stourbridge Town Hall, in the Crown Centre. Entry costs £2 with children under five free. For further information, visit facebook.com/Stourbridge-Vegan-festival-358772547967607/.

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Authority needs higher profile, says housing boss

NOBODY knows what the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is, according to one of its chiefs.

Councillor Mike Bird, leader of Walsall Council and the WMCA's portfolio holder for housing and land delivery, has led his first meeting of the board.

Among the items on the agenda were social housing and the potential of former shops to help ease housing pressures.

However, toward the end of the meeting, Councillor Bird said that people need to know what the WMCA is before they can really start working towards their goal of 215,000 new homes by 2031.

"If we get a site where the combined authority have assisted, we need to have a sign that says 'in conjunction with the combined authority'. Because who knows who the combined authority are, apart from the people sitting around here? Nobody. Nobody.

"We've done this with other economical developments, and we need to make sure that we're promoting our cause."

The authority was formed in 2016 and is made up of seven West Midlands councils, including all of those in the Black Country.

It has powers in a range of areas including transport, economic development and regeneration. The body was formed to help the region compete with areas such as London.

Off-duty nurses help injured boy

A 12-year-old boy was badly hurt after being hit by a car in Wall Heath last week.

Paramedics were called to the scene outside The Wall Heath Tavern on July 16 where the boy was treated for his injuries.

Off-duty nurses who happened to be on the scene gave the boy first aid before he was given pain relief and taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

A West Midlands Ambulance spokesperson confirmed: "We were called at 6pm on Monday. One ambulance attended. We treated a 12-year-old boy who was taken to Russells Hall hospital. A couple of off-duty nurses that were on scene provided first aid. He suffered a number of serious injuries."

Family history fun

A family fun day is being held at Dudley Archives and Local History Centre. Visitors to the centre in Tipton Road on Wednesday (August 1) from 10.30am to 3.30pm will be able to find out how to research family history.

Fewer jobless but more claim benefits

UNEMPLOYMENT has fallen in the West Midlands with the number in work in the region at a new record high of 2.78 million.

Nationally the number of people in work and job vacancies have also reached new record levels. Employment in the UK increased by 137,000 in the quarter to May to 32.4 million, the highest figure since records began in 1971, giving a record rate of 75.7 per cent. Job vacancies increased by 7,000 to 824,000 – the most since records began in 2001.

For the West Midlands the number in work is up 137,000 on the year. Karen Townley, customer services manager with Jobcentre Plus in Walsall, said jobs were continuing to become available across the Black Country.

Primark at Intu Merry Hill is looking to fill 150 full and part-time vacancies by November, TK Maxx is recruiting 40 in Walsall, Poundland has 20 warehouse jobs available at its headquarters in Willenhall and 250 local apprenticeships are available in Wolverhampton.

Nationally unemployment fell by 12,000 to 1.41 million, giving a jobless rate of 4.2 per cent, the joint lowest for more than 30 years, according to the Office for National Statistics.

The West Midlands figure was down 2,000 to 141,000 – 4.8 per cent of the working population. Over the course of the last year it has fallen by 25,000.

Average earnings increased by 2.5 per cent in the year to May, compared with 2.4 per cent the previous month. The claimant count, which includes people on Jobseeker's Allowance and the unemployment element of Universal Credit, increased by 7,800 last month to 898,700, around 97,000 more than a year ago.

For the West Midlands the number of claimants rose by 390 to 100,340, but Staffordshire had a fall of 165 to 6,975. Wolverhampton had a rise of 140 to 7,955 (4.9 per cent of the working population) and Dudley was up by 110 at 7,345 (3.8 per cent).

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Esther McVey said: "This Government has seen on average 1,000 more people in work each and every day."

Sandra starts running to fulfil son's dying wish

A MOTHER left heartbroken by the death of her 32-year-old son is to carry out one of his dying wishes by taking on a half-marathon in aid of charity.

Stuart Barnbrook died in October, just five weeks after being diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumour.

Before he died, his mother Sandra, aged 51, spoke to him about what she could do for him. He replied: 'Mum, do the half-marathon, that's enough.'

Stuart and Sandra

Mrs Barnbrook, a supermarket worker, said: "I said I'd run to the ends of the world for him. So I'm now doing the Great Birmingham Run."

The race takes place on October 14, but for Mrs Barnbrook, from Brierley Hill, training started in the snow earlier this year. She said: "I realised I had started to do nothing other than sit around the house. I needed to do something that was going to make me feel better.

"When I am running I feel completely free, there is nothing else in the world.

"That time away from everything and being outdoors has helped me focus on what happened and it has helped me start to deal with my grief."

Mrs Barnbrook started her training by running regular 5km races. She recently competed her first 10km race.

She will be raising money for Mary Stevens Hospice and will be watched by her husband Andy.

Mrs Barnbook said: "Stuart put up an amazing and brave battle, and was taken from us far too young."

The run takes place on October 14 for more details see www.greatrun.org/great-birmingham-run website.

Stormtroopers nab Lego builder

Amor Lamine is caught by Imperial Stormtroopers during the Star Wars Lego building event at Himley Hall

THE force was well and truly with Star Wars and Lego fans as 500 of them flocked to Himley Hall for a special Lego live build event in aid of charity.

Stormtroopers were at hand to meet fans at the event over the weekend to raise cash for the Mayor of Dudley's charities.

Members of West Midlands Garrison, a group of Star Wars fans, dressed up as Darth Vader's imperial guards. It was all part of an event which saw electrician Amor Lamine, from Lower Gornal, build pieces from his Lego collection at the hall throughout the weekend.

The pieces – including latest UCS Y-Wing – will be added to the Amor Star Wars collection currently being exhibited at the historic hall run by Dudley Council.

Mr Lamine, who has been building Star Wars Lego for over a decade, said the event went 'brilliantly'. "It was a cracking day," said the 46-year-old. "Kids came dressed up to get pictures with the Stormtroopers and the Mayor came along."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Frontline police figures plummet

THE number of frontline police officers in the West Midlands has plummeted over the last year, Home Office figures show.

West Midlands Police had 5,630 officers available for frontline duties in March – down 566 from 2017.

Staffordshire Police also had fewer bobbies on the beat, with 1,440 officers this year compared with 1,482 in March 2017.

The number of police officers across England and Wales has dropped to its lowest level since 1996 and comes as crime across the region has risen by 13 per cent, with the latest figures showing huge spikes in violent crime.

Fifth of workers have second job

A new study has found that 21 per cent of workers in the West Midlands currently have a second job, earning them around an extra £3,500 a year.

More than a third (38 per cent) would like one in the future, according to Informi, who provide expert advice and guidance for small and medium-sized businesses.

Its survey also found that 57 per cent in the region believe most people will have multiple jobs in the future. Those who already have a 'side hustle' make an average of approximately £288 a month from it.

Much ado about outdoor theatre

AN open air Shakespeare production is to be staged in Sedgley next week.

Rain or Shine Theatre Company visit Brockswood Animal Sanctuary on Thursday (August 2) to perform Much Ado About Nothing. The play, which is being given a First World War setting starts at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £14 for adults and £6 for children on (01902) 884390, or see www.rainorshine.co.uk website.

The audience is advised to take along their own seating with gates opening at the Catholic Lane site from 6.30pm.

Harassment leads to man's arrest at airport

A MAN from Slovenia who harassed a woman from Stourbridge for two years was jailed for a week and made subject of a restraining order.

Drago Kisilak was given the restraining order until 2020 along with the short custodial centre at Cannock Magistrates Court last week.

The 56-year-old pleaded guilty to a charge of harassment without violence after flying to Birmingham Airport and being arrested by waiting officers.

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Motorcycle thefts 'epidemic' petition

A PETITION to has been launched to stop the 'epidemic' of motorcycle theft in the West Midlands.

Motorcycle Action Group, which started the petition, has called upon Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and West Midlands Police to give the issue 'higher priority'.

The petition reads: "Victims of bike theft need more than a crime number, we need positive action that will deliver results."

The petition has so far attracted 196 signatures. View it at https://www.change.org/p/david-jamieson-put-an-end-to-the-motorcycle-theft-epidemic-in-the-west-midlands

Cosford ready for summer of spying

SECRET agents in the making are being invited to enter a world of espionage. RAF Cosford will hold its Summer of Spies Workshops on August 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29.

The events include Minecraft and Lego group activities themed around spy cars, creating virtual aeroplanes and code challenges.

The half day runs from 9am until midday, with the full day taking place from 9am until 4pm.

Entry costs £20 for a half day and £30 for a full day.

For more information about the museum's August activities visit raf museum.org/cosford.

Gazing into the past at gallery

A NEW exhibition is set to offer a glimpse into the past. Grace A Williams' Intermission is at The New Art Gallery Walsall on August 10, with a preview on August 9 between 6-8pm.

The exhibition, which runs until November 10, will see a two-screen projection focused on the gaze of two men whose portraits appeared on nineteenth century slides. For more information, visit: https://thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk/exhibition/grace-a-williams-intermission/

More than a Lidl boost for sales in World Cup

LIDL supermarkets experienced the highest numbers of shoppers ever outside the Christmas period during the World Cup.

The Second busiest day in the chain's history was on June 30 with customers up 12 per cent on the same day in 2017. World Cup barbecues drove sales across meat and poultry, and beer, wine and spirits.

Police dropping hard-to-solve cases

POLICE are ditching criminal investigations that they believe they have little chance of solving.

West Midlands Police chief constable Dave Thompson said the volume and complex nature of crimes dealt with by the force meant that 'challenging discussions' were taking place over which investigations are pursued. He revealed that crimes including theft from vehicles, criminal damage and public order offences may not get past the first stage of investigation.

Mr Thompson explained: "We have to make difficult decisions over which crimes will result in us catching anybody."

Last year it emerged that the Metropolitan Police had curtailed investigations into shoplifting up to a certain value. Mr Thompson said that WMP would not be following a similar path. However, he said a squeeze on resources meant the force was having to look carefully at which crimes it investigates.

"Every crime that is reported to us will have an initial investigation to see if there is anything there," he said. "The decision we then have to make is does it move into secondary investigation because there is potential lines of inquiry. This is involving some challenging discussions.

"There is not a crime type we are saying we don't investigate anymore, but actually we are having to make a decision which says, 'is this likely to result in us catching anybody?' This is more likely to happen in the volume crime areas, thefts from vehicles, criminal damage, some of the public order cases."

The number of officers on the force has fallen from 8,626 to 6,758 over the last seven years.

Violent crime soars across Black Country

Report by Alex Ross

VIOLENT crime across the Black Country has almost doubled in five years, while weapons possession has also rocketed, a study of new crime figures has revealed.

The statistics from the Office of National Statistics show a trend across Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Weapons possession, vehicle offences and sex attacks have all increased. But the number of drug offences has fallen. Shoplifting, bike thefts and criminal damage and arson vary.

In Dudley, violent crime involving injury has almost doubled in the five years.

Rocketed

Police recorded 2,549 such incidents in the borough over the year up to March this year. This is up 20 per cent from the year before and a 99 per cent from five years ago. Violence without injury also rocketed, from 670 to 1,712 in five years.

Worryingly, like Wolverhampton, the number of weapons possession offences almost doubled over the five years. Drug offences, however, have slumped.

Overall, crime increased in the borough 50 per cent over the five years, to 21,411 recorded incidents over the latest period.

In Sandwell, it was much the same story again. Violent crime with injury doubled over five years from 1,838 to 3,378, as did violent crime without injury, rising from 769 to 2,260.

In Wolverhampton, the number of people caught with guns, knives and other weapons has rocketed by 91 per cent in the five-year period, by 20 per cent in the last 12 months alone. In Walsall, incidents of violence with injury went up to 2,558 – a rise of 70 per cent over five years

Pupils taught to use lifesaving gadgets

Paul Grove from FastAid Black Country trains pupils at Redhill School how to use defibrillators and how to perform CPR

MORE than 300 pupils at a school in Stourbridge have been trained how to use defibrillators.

Pupils from Redhill School were trained by a member of FastAid Black Country in a project spearheaded by the Merry Hill shopping centre. The project has seen Intu Merry Hill and FastAid Black Country teach children how to use defibrillators and CPR.

Intu Merry Hill has donated 14 defibrillator machines to schools in the Dudley area. The shopping centre committed to installing more defibrillators and increasing training after a colleague had a heart attack in the centre and was saved by another colleague using a defib.

Naomi Campbell, Community Development Manager at intu Merry Hill, said: "W ehave been training them to use CPR and the defibrillators.We've been raising money to get defibrillators into the local community – we've now got 14 across the Dudley area.The one we donated to Redhill school was already sitting in reception waiting for us."

Ms Campbell said the training would give the community power to help people. So far, 1,800 children have been trained on how to use defibrillators and perform CPR. Intu Merry Hill has been fundraising and donating from its own budget to fund the defibrillators.

The plucky duckies are racing on canal again

THE Black Country Duck Race is back for a second year, raising money for Mary Stevens Hospice.

The Tenth Lock Pub will host the race on the canal on Sunday, August 5, starting at noon.

Rubber ducks will compete for the ultimate prize of £100, after racing down the canal to the finish line, helped along whatever the weather by the local fire service and their hose.

The pub will also be running a free family fun day with special guests, Ian Hamilton and Baggie Bird, complete with the animal man, ice cream, a BBQ, live music, children's characters and an outdoor real ale and gin bar.

Ducks are available to buy for £3 per duck and can be bought at the Tenth Lock Pub, Canalside Tackle or online via www.marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/duck-race-2018/ and the event is being sponsored in full by Canalside Tackle.

Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundraising at the hospice: "It's events like this that make such a difference to our patients and it will be a spectacular community event which makes it even more special. We're so grateful to The Tenth Lock and Canalside Tackle for making it possible, and we can't wait to see people lining the banks of the canal cheering their ducks home to victory!"

Chere Griffin, Tenth Lock manager, said: "Last year we had great fun and raised loads of money for the brilliant work of the hospice and the families they support. Soon after we had a meeting to make sure it would happen again this year."

Sabbath and the Stones in display

BLACK Sabbath, the Rolling Stones, Nina Simone and more are the subjects of a photo exhibition in the West Midlands.

The exhibition, that takes place at Havill and Travis Gallery in Harborne, Birmingham, features a number of images from the 1960s shot by Jim Simpson, former manager of city metal icons Black Sabbath.

As part of Birmingham Jazz Festival, the exhibition explores rock and blues music in the Midlands.

Subjects include the likes of Mick Jagger at ATV Studios in Aston, Little Richard and Chuck Berry at Birmingham Hippodrome, Jerry Lee Lewis in the mayor's parlour in West Bromwich, Howlin' Wolf at Birmingham Town Hall, and more. The exhibition runs until July 31.

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Single punch by customer knocked out pub boss

A PUB manager's skull was fractured when he was knocked out by a single punch from a customer, a judge heard.

Gary Redmond had a row with his then partner in the Seven Stars at Oldswinford,Wolverhampton Crown Court was told, this led to him insulting the girlfriend of the pub's manager Rob Eaton.

Mr Daniel Oscroft, prosecuting, said that she told Mr Eaton that Redmond had slapped the back of her head. As Mr Eaton approached Redmond outside the pub the 46-year-old hit him with 'an almighty punch'.

"The blow knocked him out and when his skull hit the Tarmac it literally cracked and he suffered a significant injury," said Mr Oscroft. Eaton sent a sympathetic message to his victim days later.

Mr Anthony Cook, defending, said Redmond had still been 'on edge' following an incident four months before when someone had attacked him from behind. "He thought it better to get in first," added Mr Cook. The victim was in hospital for four days and has since left the pub trade.

Redmond, of Church Road, Stourbridge, of previous good character, pleaded guilty on the day of trial to causing grievous bodily harm to Mr Eaton on August 6, 2016 . He was given a 21-month jail sentence, suspended for two years, with 150 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay £600.

Martial artists' seeing Sense

A MARTIAL arts club is set to host a fundraising challenge to raise cash for national disability charity Sense.

Members of the Saracens Martial Arts Club, in Dudley, will take part in a 5k run and a number of mega challenges, including, kicks, punches and press ups, all in fancy dress, on Saturday. The members, aged from seven, are hoping to raise more than £1,500.

Sifu Ken Hoult, who runs the club, has been fundraising for the charity, which supports people with complex disabilities, since 2015 when he organised a martial arts challenge that raised more than £1,500.

Mr Hoult, 64, said: "I hope with the fundraising challenge, my group can achieve their personal goals and raise money for a good charitable cause."

Council mean business

DUDLEY Council's Business First service, a dedicated team offering business support and signposting services, won Best for Business Engagement at the Federation of Small Business Best in Class awards.

Backlash after call for ban on Staffies

AN ANIMAL rights group has been accused of attempting to 'blacken the name' of Staffordshire Bull Terriers by trying to get the breed banned.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has demanded Staffies be added to a list of species prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act, saying they are often abandoned.

PETA says the best way to end the abuse is to stop people breeding the animals but their call has been met with mass public opposition.

A petition urging the Government to reject the calls has attracted more than 160,000 signatures, with the highest number of signatures in the country coming from Cannock Chase and Stafford.

Across the county more than 3,000 people signed the petition, which was debated by the Petitions Committee in Westminster Hall on Monday.

Warley MP John Spellar and Stafford MP Jeremy Lefroy was among those to speak in defence of Staffies.

Labour MP Mr Spellar accused PETA of attempting to 'blacken the name' of Staffies.

Absurd

He said: "It is absurd that this organisation is trying to ban them, rather than deal with the vicious owners and those who get involved in dog fighting. That should be the priority – not damning a breed that is so appreciated by so many in the West Midlands."

Tory MP Mr Lefroy said 'the Staffie holds a special place in people's hearts' and that a positive view of the dog was 'widely held'.

"It would be a terrible tragedy for the dog-lovers of the UK to lose the right to own one of the great companions," he said.

Both MPs were praised by committee chair Helen Jones for giving a 'sterling defence' of Staffordshire Bull Terriers.

The pro-Staffie petition was set up by Steven Quinn, who said: "People create dangerous dogs, people are the problem."

The Government said it has no plan to add Staffies to the Dangerous Dogs Act.

Green light for 225 new homes despite concerns

CONTROVERSIAL plans to build more than 200 homes on the former Ibstock Brick site have been given the green light.

Dudley Council's development control committee last week voted to approve the plans for 225 homes off Tansey Green Road, Pensnett.

This was despite concerns from fellow councillors about an increase in traffic and extra pressures on nearby Russells Hall Hospital.

Work is also under way on the Tansey Green Retail Park across the road, which includes building a further 200 homes.

Councillor Bryan Cotterill said: "It is fine to keep building massive estates but what impact is it going to have on Russells Hall Hospital?

"There is another Taylor Wimpey development a stone's throw away from this which is currently being developed. The roads will not cope. There is a constant traffic jam down Cinder Road. It is silly to say it will not have a big impact. But I am pleased to hear money will go to schools as part of the section 106 and we do need houses in the area."

Six objections were lodged against proposals for the 18-acre site, which also included concerns over noise during construction.

Disruption

But planning officers said noise barriers would be placed to combat disruption to residents during building work.

One member of the committee abstained while six others voted in favour of the development.

Ward Councillor John Martin welcomed the move,saying: "We need more homes in the area and it is a derelict site at the moment that could be subject to anti-social behaviour or even traveller encampments if it is left any longer. Residents cautiously welcome it but there needs to be the investment in the roads, schools and GPs."

There will be four single-bedroom, 57 two-bedroom and 61 four-bedroomed homes. Developer Taylor Wimpey stated one in four of the homes would be 'affordable'.

Parks fly flag among the best

Celebrating the Green Flag award are, from left, Friends of Mary Stevens Park vice-chairman Mark Gadd, volunteer Mervin Bonnett, chairman Heather Rogers, park ranger Debbie Merrick and (front) environmental services boss Councillor Karen Shakespeare at Mary Stevens Park

SIX parks and nature reserves in the Dudley borough have been awarded Green Flag status.

Priory Park, Buffery Park and Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve in Dudley, Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge, Leasowes Park in Halesowen and Silver Jubilee Park in Coseley have all received the Green Flag Award, which is handed out by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy.

A Green Flag flying overhead is a sign to visitors that the green space boasts the highest possible standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent facilities.

Priory Park and Mary Stevens Park also received Green Heritage Site Accreditation for management of historic features.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "I am really pleased that the hard work of our teams and members of the community has been recognised."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Store gets a fresh look after revamp

A SUPERMARKET in Dudley reopened to customers following a refurbishment.

The new layout at Aldi in Saltwells Road, Netherton, is part of the company's £300 million investment into improving stores. The refurbishment included the creation of an additional three jobs, to join the team of 28.

Paul Lloyd, store manager, said: "The store is looking fantastic and we can't wait to welcome our loyal customers back so they can see it for themselves. We are committed to making sure that the shopping experience is on a par with the products and services."

Vulnerable helped back into work

PEOPLE with mental health illnesses or long-term physical health conditions are being urged to sign up for a pilot scheme that aims to help them get back into employment.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust is launching the Thrive into Work programme to test a new employment support service offering one-to-one support. George Farmer, a manager at the trust, said: "Dudley's rate of unemployment is higher than the national average and these vulnerable people need our focus to help them make progress."

Some pupils too tired for school

MORE parents in the West Midlands are keeping their children off school due to tiredness, new research reveals.

A sleep study commissioned by online parenting resource Families Online, has shown that 10 per cent of local parents surveyed with children aged up to 12 had have kept their child at home because they were too tired to go. The poll also found that 20 per cent said their child suffers from tiredness every day after school and there was concern that children are not getting enough sleep at night.

Special needs views are being surveyed

THE views of children with special educational needs or disabilities, their families and carers in Dudley are being sought in a consultation which launched this month. The survey comes from the multi-agency SEND improvement board, made up of representatives from the health service, education, social care, voluntary sector and parents and carers. Visit www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/dudleysend. Consultation is until September 21.

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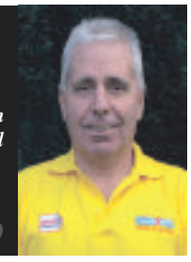

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

New-style lessons that may not add up

THE bold new future of British education. New government guidelines mean that from 2020, infant-school pupils will be taught about responsible use of social media, transgender issues, and the importance of getting exercise.

The only problem is, when it comes to those boring, old-fashioned fuddy-duddy subjects, you know, reading, writing and arithmetic, our schools lag way behind those of countries such as Singapore and China. Maybe somewhere, in the very crowded curriculum, is there any chance of fitting a bit of this stuff in?

❒❒❒

FASHION brand Burberry has admitted to burning £28 million worth of excess stock every year, to stop it being sold to the "wrong people". Very public spirited. And talk of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

❒❒❒

ACROSS the West Midlands crime is on the rise. Big jumps in violence, sex offences and robberies. Nearly 3,000 offences involving knife crime in the past 12 months alone. Think about that for one minute – on average, in the West Midlands, there is a crime involving a blade every three hours.

Police and crime commissioner David Jamieson says more resources are needed. Of course he does. And perhaps people would be willing to pay a little more in tax if they believed it meant more thieves, robbers and hoodlums being put away.

But here's another statistic. Last year West Midlands Police dispatched blue-light emergency response vehicles to 94 reports of so-called hate crimes. Just 24 of these reports led to an arrest. In 20 of these call-outs, the alleged victim didn't want the police there.

Now, I'm sure many of those cases were genuine emergencies, where people were in real danger. In those cases it is right and proper that the police act swiftly and that the assailants face the full force of the law.

However, the fact that nearly a quarter of alleged victims didn't understand why the Old Bill were called in the first place suggests that sometimes there might have been an over-reaction.

Contrast this to the case of the baby abducted in the car-jacking last week, when police took 15 minutes to respond. The problem is that too often the authorities appear more concerned with people's attitudes and motives than what they have actually done. Wolf-whistling seems to be taken more seriously than burglary.

What will Sir Cliff do with his cash? A summer holiday?

Sir Cliff's wrangle with the Beeb... another addition to TV licence costing?

Trump and Putin – but Donald's paltry £3.1bn is petty cash compared to Vlad's

Corbyn's poetic platitudes on hatred, but what about antisemitism? Sorry Jezza? Speak up...

President's billions Trumped by Putin

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I AM grateful to the reader who suggests a simple way to break the deadlock over Brexit. Penalties

UP pops a nasty little email from TV Licensing headed: "You've just days left to renew your TV licence." This is the first alert, not the final warning, so why the threatening tone? Why do they make it sound like we've done something wrong? If they think "just days" is cutting it a bit fine, then why not give us more warning? TV Licensing has always struck me as a bunch of bullies and they don't try to make any friends. The sooner the whole iniquitous and outdated TV licence is scrapped, the better.

AND how many of us will be forking out the licence fee purely to pay the BBC's damages to Cliff Richard?

YOU may recall I wrote some time ago about our local council erecting, at great expense, an anti-caravan gate at the local park so immense and so strong that it would probably stop a Challenger tank. A couple of days ago ten caravans quietly set up camp in the park. The travellers had totally ignored the shiny, formidable front gate and slipped in through the rickety old back gate. Who'd have thought it?

MEANWHILE, despite all those dire warnings that the stern new MoT test would take thousands of old bangers off the road, my ancient diesel has sailed through. I am now thinking of changing cars. It's a choice between poisoning 50,000 people a year (diesel) or ratcheting up global warming (petrol). There is only one way to decide. Penalties.

I WROTE recently about the prospect of a second referendum on Scottish independence. The land border between England and Scotland is just over 100 miles long while the problematical border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, which you'd think would be shorter, is three times as long. Even so, 100 miles is quite enough to cause problems and I can't recall hearing Scotland's plan for dealing with them. How on earth could they stop all those starving, envious, raggedy-trousered, post-Brexit Sassenachs from streaming northward to the sunlit uplands of Free Caledonia?

FINGER trouble. "Sunlit uplands" almost appeared as "unlit suplands." Come to think of it . . .

WHY did Putin look so superior and the "miss-speaking" Trump seem so cowed and confused at Helsinki? Leaving aside the rumour that the Kremlin has blackmail-grade material on the US president, consider the money. Money defines Donald Trump. He lives and breathes the stuff. The reason he treats European politicians with contempt may be that he knows he is richer than all of them combined. And then suddenly he is confronted by Vladimir Putin who is not only smarter, harder, fitter and infinitely more experienced in global politics but richer than him. Nobody knows how wealthy Putin is but by some estimates he is the richest man in the world. The Russian president could buy and sell Trump, and clearly unnerves him. Their meeting was like an eager but baffled old dog trying to make friends with a young, bored and extremely dangerous cheetah.

A READER admits he's puzzled by the seasons in Poldark (BBC1). One moment they're picking apples, the next it's summer flowers. He says: "Time does seem to be going backwards. When do the dead characters come back to life?" It is strange how film makers muck about with the seasons. In that fine 2007 movie Atonement, British soldiers are seen making their way towards the 1940 Dunkirk evacuation while walking through fields of stubble and picking apples from the trees. In May?

MY car hunt goes on. In the past I have found that the car that's right for you will speak to you. A few days ago in a showroom a gleaming white Audi convertible spoke to me very seductively but unfortunately Mrs Rhodes overheard it.

"WHEN we divide ourselves by xenophobia . . . when we divide ourselves by hatred, at the end of the day we all lose," declares Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party which, 70 years after the Holocaust, still cannot agree on a definition of antisemitism.

TALKING POINT

Crime: All we really want is to feel safe

A YOUNG man I know was recently attacked by youths who were drinking outside a town centre pub, he having seemingly done nothing other than attract their attention by wearing his shop uniform.

The victim and a colleague were repeatedly punched and his car damaged. He got away and went to Cannock police station while they returned to their drinking. Any hopes he had of police swooping on the thugs were dashed when told there was no-one available to deal with him and could he return on Monday – this was Thursday evening.

He did return and make a statement but heard nothing. Is it too much of a leap to think these yobs will now be feeling a little invincible having gotten away with this brazen attack and do it again?

Sadly this is not an unusual anecdote in Staffordshire or the West Midlands. Newspapers and social media are filled with similar tales such as businessmen watching helpless as burglars ransack their premises, closed police stations and reported crimes not being investigated.

Many crimes, it seems, go unreported. Anti-social behaviour, vandalism, even assaults aren't reported because 'the police won't be interested', we hear people say. The latest crime figures are depressing. Possession of weapons offences rose from 1,207 to 1,857 over the last five years in the West Midlands, from 313 to 679 in Staffordshire. Public order offences up from 5,368 to 11,579 in the West Midlands and from 1,813 to 4,381 in Staffordshire, according to the Office of National Statistics.

Half of investigations into recorded crime in this country are closed without a suspect being identified - HALF!

There will be mitigation of data being collected differently, certain crimes more commonly reported now and some 'success' stories. But we don't need these statistics. We are too aware of increasing violence, anti-social behaviour, friends being robbed or burgled. These figures just confirm our worst fears and we are afraid. I'm cautious about where I park my car, whether my house is secure, about walking alone, about thieves or fraudsters targeting my elderly relatives.

But mostly I worry every time my children leave the house as I'm sure does every single parent as we witness increasing violence in the region robbing mothers of their loved ones. I'm tired of being told 'there is not enough money'. Keeping people safe, keeping police stations open and bobbies on the beat, surely these are priorities for any government.

DIANE DAVIES

Brexit bullying tactics not democracy

ALONGSIDE many Germans, French, Irish and many other nationalities, I have just returned from my annual pilgrimage to the Somme battlefields and the ceremonies in remembrance of millions whose lives were sacrificed on the altar of militant nationalism in 1916.

This morning I received the emailed public communication of July 12 purporting to be from Theresa May. I have never seen such a dogmatic, vague, wishful-thinking, misleading and negative statement from any Government.

I still find it difficult to believe that the working people of Britain could have been persuaded to vote to leave the EU which, for all its faults, is based on peace, stability, collaboration and protecting the rights and conditions of employment, food safety, pollution control, international arrest warrants and justice. Did any of us vote to abolish these values?

Nigel Farrage said: "If we lose this referendum, we will fight for another!" Now that the boot is on the other foot it's a different story.

The extreme Brexiteers are accusing anyone who still questions our withdrawal as thwarting the so-called 'will of the people'. The referendum reflected the confusion of the British people, not the will. Only half the population voted and that half were almost evenly divided – 48 per cent to 52 per cent. Only one quarter of the country voted to leave. That's not democracy!

What's done cannot be undone but what's not done can be avoided if only the people and Parliament have the courage to do it. The country is being run by headless chickens and a few ego-centric bullies.

ROBERT PERRY
Stourbridge

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Not such a special relationship

FOR once I fully support a Conservative Prime Minister.

The last time we danced to America's tune we went to war with Iraq, creating turmoil in the Middle East that spawned terrorism and mass migration into Europe.

I say to those who believe that we should give into Trump's trade war threats that the 'special relationship' is a joke and has been so for years.

To those who think we owe America for 'saving us' during the war that is completely untrue. By the time the Americans joined in, the RAF had mastered the skies. Most historians agree that if Japan had not attacked Pearl Harbour, it is highly likely that America would not have entered the war at all.

Stick to your guns Mrs May! The Brexiteers say we have the entire world to trade with, so we don't need America pushing us around.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Wall Heath

Add Red Hall to list

THE article on the front page, Speed Limit To Protect Pupils, states that new 20mph zones will be put in place at 11 schools in the borough. I applaud this action. However, I am concerned that Red Hall Primary in Gornal hasn't been included in the list of schools. This is a split site school which sees staff and pupils moving back and forth across a busy main road throughout the day.

I myself have stood waiting to cross on the Zebra crossing, sometimes with pupils, and watched cars, lorries and vans speed by without stopping to let us cross. The introduction of a 20mph limit would greatly increase the safety of pupils, parents and staff. The article further states: "The 20 mph would only operate during school drop-off and pick-up times." I would suggest it needs to operate throughout the school day, in the case of Red Hall in particular.

MRS KAREN CARTWRIGHT
Dudley

Water tips just will not wash

I LOVE the Chronicle's resident opinion columns and the letters page.

However, I was riled when the Talking Point columnist rattled on extolling the virtues of water saving tips and belittling the use of jet washers – when the gardening columnist advised us to give our gardens a good soak!

Jet washers use far less water than standard garden hoses and can be safely used to water plants. Maybe the person using the jet washer had a long break between watering sessions?

People pay for their water so it is the responsibility of the supplier to maintain sufficient reserves.

Our friends at Seven Trent, etc, should concentrate on preventing burst pipes that damage property and waste millions of litres of water before flooding the public with water saving tips.

JOHN GILBERT
Halesowen

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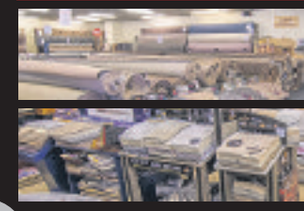

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£1m investment to get rid of potholes

MORE than £1 million will be ploughed into improving crumbling roads in a Black Country borough.

The major investment has been announced by Sandwell Council after it was revealed the number of potholes across the area had almost doubled in the space of a year.

It is hoped repairing the roads now will help prevent the emergence of potholes next winter.

The cold snap at the start of the year took its toll on the borough's roads. More than 2,000 potholes have been reported by drivers in the borough since the start of the year. Highways chiefs said 61 roads had been resurfaced since spring.

The work is expected to cost around £1m and will be in addition to further planned work. Sandwell's cabinet member for highways and environment Councillor David Hosell said: "We've committed this money not only to pothole repairs but to resurfacing roads extensively to protect them for years to come."

Drug dealer with disguised stun gun jailed for five years

A DRUG dealer, who kept a stun gun disguised as a torch hidden in his bedroom, has been jailed for five years.

Police found the weapon together with £1,200 worth of cannabis bagged up and ready for sale when they swooped on the home of Stefan Gregg and his partner Michelle Hirst.

Officers also found a nunchucks martial arts weapon and an air gun together with a mobile phone which had been used by 27-year-old Gregg to advertise the sale of 'high grade' cannabis, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Mr Mark Phillips, prosecuting, revealed: "There was a lot of evidence of his dealing. It was being run as a profitable business but did not involve a very wide group of people."

Hirst was wrapping up the cannabis into street deals when police raided the couple's home in Haywharf Road, Pensnett, in 2016 but the mother-of-two played a minor role in the operation, it was said.

Meter

Gregg pleaded guilty to being in possession of a disguised firearm but insisted he thought it was a torch and not a weapon when he bought it at a car boot sale.

The defendant said he wanted it to read the electricity meter in the dark but never used it because they switched to a smart meter soon afterwards.

It transpired that he already had a torch for night fishing and told police in an interview that there were several more in the house.

The prosecutor maintained: "You bought the disguised firearm because you are a man with a fascination for weapons."

The torch worked but the Chinese-made Taser-style stun gun did not when tested by a weapons expert. Mr Phillips conceded: "We cannot say with certainty that it was ever capable of being fired."

Judge Barry Berlin ruled: "The Nunchucks, BB gun and stun gun fit in with the pattern of a drug dealer seeking to protect himself."

Gregg, who also admitted possession of cannabis with intent to supply, was jailed for a total of five years. Hirst was given a three month prison term suspended for two years with 100 hours community service after pleading guilty to the same offence.

Couple's colourful garden

Donald and Barbara Hall enjoying their garden at their home in Netherton

A BLACK Country pensioner has spoken of his pride for his garden, which is basking in the glory of the great British summer.

Donald Hall, from Abingdon Road, Netherton, has previously won awards for his garden, which he tends to alongside his wife Barbara, a former florist.

Mr Hall described tending to his garden as 'therapeutic' after having 10 major operations and said it's the 'nicest garden' he and his wife have ever had.

He said: "I can't do heavy work and being in the garden is not heavy work, it's mainly planting pots in the potting shed. Being in the garden and going fishing makes me feel pretty well after my operations, it's really therapeutic.

"I've been gardening for a good few years. I'm not bragging but it's the nicest garden we've ever had.

"A few years ago, when we entered the garden competition we won it and the next year we finished second"

The 79-year-old added: "It's absolutely full of colour. Everywhere there is a bit of soil there are plants. They're all around the walls and on the stands there's hanging baskets. I've never seen it so beautiful."

£69m new skills deal

THE region is building a multi-million pound war chest to address the region's chronic skills shortage, Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, has said.

Speaking at the launch of the Government's new £69 million skills deal for the region – the first in the country – the mayor said a number of elements were 'falling into place' to combat the lack of training opportunities. Although job creation is surging across parts of the West Midlands, employers have raised concerns that a long-term skills shortage is a barrier for growth.

The deal, which was announced by Education Secretary Damian Hinds, will fund the creation of new apprenticeships and careers advice, improve facilities in local colleges and pilot a retraining scheme.

Theft alert for the owners of expensive cars

OWNERS of high-performance vehicles are being urged to be on alert for theft after a spate of stolen vehicles in South Staffordshire.

Since May there have been more than 50 crimes including thefts, attempted thefts and car key burglaries reported across the area.

Thieves are targeting high value performance vehicles and the cars targeted are less than three years old. There have also been a number of Transit vans stolen, again from residential areas.

Detective Inspector John Quilty from Staffordshire Police's Criminal Investigation Department, said: "Vehicle security technology is constantly being advanced by manufacturers but unfortunately technology is also being developed and used by criminals to combat these new measures."

Model tried to make kidnapper 'fall in love'

A MODEL caught up in a terrifying ordeal has revealed how she tried to make her kidnapper – who had been living in the Black Country – fall in love with her to escape captivity in Italy.

Chloe Ayling, aged 20, was snatched after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan and bundled into the boot of a car.

She was taken to a remote farmhouse where she was held for six days by Lukasz Herba, 30.

The Polish national, who had been living in Tividale, was jailed for nearly 17 years last month after being convicted by an Italian court of kidnapping the London-based model.

Speaking about her ordeal, she revealed that after two days of being chained to a chest of drawers, she agreed to share a bed with her captor.

Bond

"The more we started talking, the more the bond was kind of forming and once I realised he was starting to like me, I knew I had to use that to my advantage," she said.

Ms Ayling says it was 'horrendous' when she arrived at the house and Herba said she would be sold as a sex slave unless she found 300,000 Euros (£265,000).

"I thought what he was saying was all true and I didn't doubt him for a second because he was so detailed in responses to my questions," she said.

But he also asked her if he could kiss her and if they could have a relationship.

"I thought 'this is my chance to get out'," Ms Ayling said.

"Once I saw his reaction to what I was saying – that things could happen in the future – he was acting excited and really looking forward to it and always talking about it.

"It was that response that made me realise I needed to keep doing that." Eventually, when he realised the ransom was not going to be paid, he released her and drove her to the British consulate in Milan.

While they were waiting for the consulate to open, witnesses reported seeing them laughing together in a cafe.

But Ms Ayling said: "Why would you be 'offish' with the person who is starting to have feelings for you and is relying on that to release you? I had to do everything I could to make him fall in love with me."

Herba was jailed in June for 16 years and nine months following a trial at a court in Milan. Ms Ayling said she felt vindicated by the guilty verdict after claims had been made that the kidnapping was a publicity stunt.

Police raided a block of flats in Tividale after the kidnapping made international headlines last year.

She said: "I still don't fully understand his motivation. It can't just be money. He added me on Facebook two years ago. It's like he's been stalking me, so it must be obsession as well."

Lukasz Herba – asked to kiss his captive, says kidnapped model

Chloe Ayling hoped that getting her captor to like her might save her

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Snooker ace is chief guest at Barmy Ball

A GROUP of cyclists are hosting a black-tie evening featuring snooker legend Willie Thorne to raise money for Midlands Air Ambulance.

The Barmy Ball, will include a live band, DJ, auction and raffle. The event takes place at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill, on November 24.

Following the success of their first ball last year, where more than £14,000 was raised for the charity, the Barmy Team have organised the event with the aim of beating last year's total.

Martin Whelan, Barmy Ball organiser, said: "Last year, the evening was such a success it made sense to come back this year with a bigger and better event.

"Already tickets are selling fast, which is why we've launched the event now, and I can't wait to see how the night goes as we raise funds for such a worthy cause."

Adam Williams, corporate development executive for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, added: "It's fantastic that this brilliant event is taking place for a second time, after it was such a success last year."

Willie Thorne, host for the evening, added: "I'm so pleased to be hosting the Barmy Ball this year, it's going to be so much fun for a very worthwhile cause." For tickets call 07837 755686.

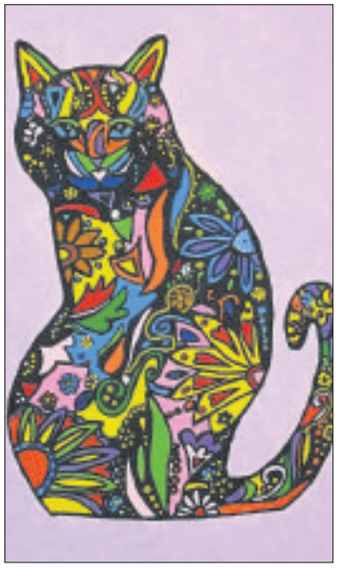
£2k lotto cash pays for new greenhouse

BOSSES at a sheltered housing complex in Dudley have secured lottery funding to buy a new greenhouse for green-fingered residents.

Officers at Dudley Council helped staff at the site, which is run by Nehemiah UCHA, submit a successful bid for £2,340 funding.

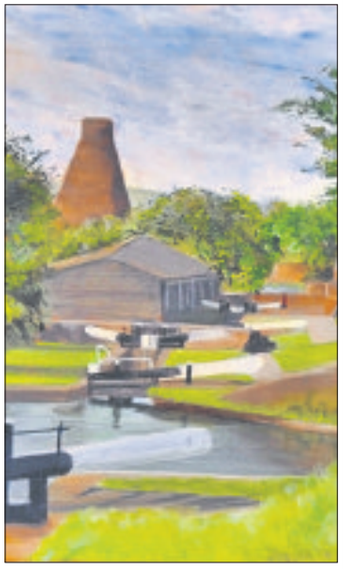
Residents at Henry Court in Charlton Street will now be growing their own pumpkins, sweetcorn, peppers, runner beans, onions and strawberries.

Bratch Lock by Mel Eddowes will be on show



'Ozzy', Elaine Skidmore will be on display

Jacky Herrington's Red Poppies artwork



The Locks, Wordsley by Bronwyn Phillips

Victory artists' work in frame

WORK by members of a Wolverhampton art group will be in the frame at an exhibition next month.

The annual display, by the Victory Painting Group, takes place over the August bank holiday.

Since last year, the 32 members of the art group have produced more than 200 new paintings, which cover a variety of mediums and will be on sale during the exhibition, on August 25 and 26.

The exhibition takes place at Victory Hall, Greyhound Lane, Lower Penn, next to the Greyhound pub, from 11am to 4pm each day. There is disabled access and free parking.

Raffle prizes have been donated by Lea Nixon and Stephen Coates, watercolourists, and by oil painter Colin Joyce – some of the professional artists who have given painting demonstrations at the club during the last year.

Refreshments

Artists will be happy to meet visitors and popular greetings cards, all printed from all printed from original paintings by Victory Painting Group, will be on sale. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. Victory Painting Group meets each week at Victory Hall, with artists visiting every month to demonstrate techniques.

Throughout the year there are a variety of painting demonstrations from visiting professional artists. Workshops are staged as well as visits to art festivals and visits to art festivals. Paintings are often displayed in Gravel Hill Doctors Surgery in Wombourne, at Farmers and Friends cafe at Shipley Garden Village, in Bridgnorth Road and at the Spring Hill pub and restaurant, Warstones Road Penn.

This year the group has also exhibited at The Dudley Canal Trust and at The Guildhall in Much Wenlock.

Visit www.victorypaintinggroup.co.uk for more details.

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Golfers and racers chip in for charities

Tom Pain from the pro shop, volunteer Dave Moore, Ange and John Gaskell and Dave Pain, club director, with players

GOLFERS from the Black Country chipped in to raise more than £14,000 for a cancer foundation.

Ange and John Gaskell hosted their 10th event for the Rainbow Cancer Care Foundation at Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club.

The golf day saw 160 players battle it out for individual men and women honours and spot prizes.

Mr Gaskell, who runs Revs Suspension Services in Halesowen and is a former British and European sidecar trials champion, said: "It was a great day of fun and laughter and enjoyment, whilst raising a huge amount of money for several supported charities, which included Midlands Air Ambulance, Macmillan Nurses and Kidderminster Prostate Cancer Care.

"The first total lodged is in excess of £14,000, with two more events to run this calendar year.

"A big thank you to Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club and all our sponsors and players for helping us to raise this amazing amount.

"We'd like to thank our sponsors – Streetbike in Halesowen, Thermotech Ltd, Motorline Toyota in Stourbridge, Rygor Mercedes in Worcester, Motorcycle Mart in Kidderminster, Double Two Racing, MFB, Moto Mark Racing in Wollaston and Classic Restoration."

Pete Wright, from Tividale, who races in the No Limits endurance series under the Double Two Racing banner with Martyn Siviter, from Blackheath, had his race-winning bikes on display during the event.

Mr Wright said: "The team bought along both race bikes, sponsored two holes and auctioned off prizes such as a hospitality day out at one of our races and an amazing chance to see the British Superbike premier finale showdown event at Brands Hatch.

"All in all it was a great day."

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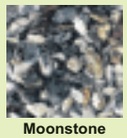
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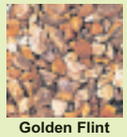
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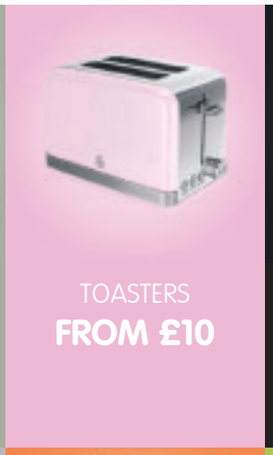

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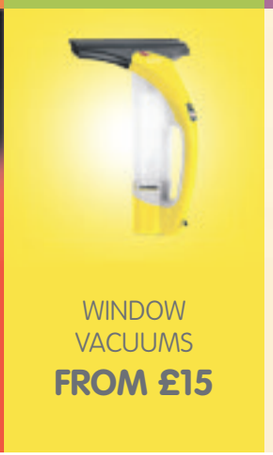

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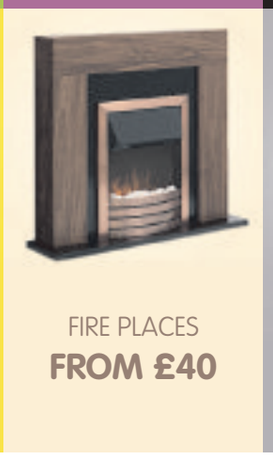

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Pub is simply the best for third year running

AN INN has scooped the Express and Star's Most Popular Pub of the Year for the Dudley area for the third year running.

The Old Bull's Head Inn, in Redhall Road, Lower Gornal, was crowned the winner after fending off fierce competition – for the third year in a row.

The competition, now in its third year, saw pubs enter the search to find the most popular pubs in the Black Country and Mid Staffordshire. Customers collected tokens in the Express and Star and placed their vote.

Lyndsey Bullock, landlady of The Old Bull's Head Inn, said: "I was quite overjoyed because it's our third time, so it's a triple whammy for us.

"I did not think I'd win and when we were told it was fabulous news, really amazing. The staff and customers are fantastic so it's good for them because they are as pleased as me."

At The Old Bull's Head, from left, landlady Lyndsey Bullock with staff Bernie Jackson, Shona Hawkins and Zara Hughes

Heart

Mrs Morris has been at the pub for three and a half years and said she 'loves it from the heart'.

She added: "I think it's the customers. Pub work is not just a job, you have to love it from the heart which I do. People say to me 'how do you do it?', but I don't think I could do anything else.

"We work hard. Not just me, but the staff to keep standards up and everybody loves it. It's clean, they love the beer and the atmosphere so we must be doing something right."

The New Wellington, in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, came in second with The Island Pool, Wolverhampton Road, near Kidderminster, third.

Alex Colbourne, manager at The New Wellington, said: "We're quite amazed to see how well the pub has been doing. It just keeps on getting busier and busier. A big thank you for all of our customers."

At the New Wellington barmaid Sami Wright, left, with chef Kelsey Hutton

Mr Colbourne, who has been manager since the pub opened last year, said 'consistency' was the key to success.

He said: "We've got a really good team here. Everybody here knows to work with everybody else and team works well with each other."

Deputy manager at The Island Pool, Aaron Drew, said: "We could not have done it without our customers. We're pleased to place in the top three but disappointed not to be number one.

"We would like to push on and improve further and get to that spot."

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We will proudly fly flag for the Black Country says Gwynne

A LEADING Labour frontbencher has hailed the Black Country flag – and pledged to fly it with pride from a Government building should Jeremy Corbyn's party get into power.

Shadow communities and local government secretary Andrew Gwynne praised the Black Country as 'one of the country's most historic and best-loved regions', and said his party would hoist the famous flag above the Communities Department building in central London to mark Black Country Day every July 14.

The striking black, white and red flag has divided opinion in Labour circles.

It is much-loved among local MPs including Ian Austin, Pat McFadden and Tom Watson, while Labour leader Mr Corbyn delivered a speech against a backdrop of the flag in Dudley in April.

However, the flag was criticised last year by Wolverhampton South West MP Eleanor Smith for the use of chains in its imagery.

Mr Gwynne said: "It's right that buildings both public and private across the Black Country will be flying the Black Country flag six years on from its inauguration.

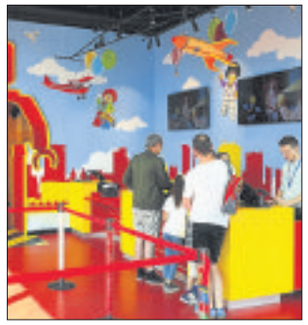
"And I can promise you that when Labour is in power every July 14, the Communities Department building in London will fly the flag with pride."

The MP for Denton and Reddish in Greater Manchester went on to commend the 'inspirational' chainmakers parade through Cradley Heath, which took place last week in tribute to women who stood up for their right to earn a living wage and 'went on to inspire a generation of female politicians'.

"They taught us of the importance of putting hard working people at the heart of the Labour movement," he said.

"Labour has never forgotten these values and we will continue to be the champions of local people and local communities, just like those in the Black Country."

Part of the Birmingham cityscape on view at the centre



Part of the entrance at the discovery centre

The team get ready for the opening at Legoland Discovery Centre

Visitors enjoy Legoland Discovery Centre in Birmingham

Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

Youngsters getting involved making their own creations in Lego

Legoland puts it all together

THE eagerly-awaited Legoland Discovery Centre in Birmingham has opened its doors.

The brand new £7million Merlin attraction, based at Arena Birmingham, features a Miniland, 4D cinema, creative workshop, Lego Duplo Farm, Lego City Builder, Merlin's Apprentice Ride, Kingdom Quest Laser Ride, Lego Racers: Build and Test, shop and cafe.

Miniland is built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks and is an interactive city where visitors can 'see airships swoop and towers glow as the little land changes from day to night'.

'Our mischievous Minifigures love hiding in Miniland – who will you spot?' says the attraction's website.

Those enjoying the 4D Cinema, meanwhile, can experience rain, wind and even snow all under one roof. There is also a Build and Test area which has thousands of bricks waiting to be made into shapes and vehicles, which can then be tried out on the speed test track and the Lego City Builder lets visitors make their very own Miniland.

Describing the Merlin's Apprentice Ride, meanwhile, the Discovery Centre site says: 'Enter Merlin's magical potion room and discover a Lego wizard's world of spells and sorcery.

'Round and round you go, pedal as fast as you can to help Merlin conjure his magic – can you reach the skies and become Merlin's top wizarding apprentice?'

Specially designed for kids aged three to 10, the 58,900 sq ft indoor Legoland Discovery Centre is based at Arena Birmingham, opposite The National Sea Life Centre.

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HOLIDAYS

Caravan park enjoys stunning views and beachfront location

Commercial feature

Glan-Y-Don is an exciting, brand new five-star holiday home park enjoying a beach front location and offering stunning sea views.

It is only yards from the spectacular golden sandy beaches of Tywyn and a short drive to the popular seaside town of Aberdovey.

The clever new tiered layout and beautiful landscaping, roads and lighting gives owners the maximum benefit of everything the park has to offer. The park also has beautiful views of the surrounding hills and countryside, not to mention easy access to all the amenities of the local town, yet still retaining a peaceful feel that appeals to old and young alike.

There are many spectacular walks in the area. Dolgoch Falls comprises of three sets of magnificent waterfalls in a beautiful wooded ravine. There are various walks around the falls.

Tywyn boasts many shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants – all within a short walk of the park and there is a leisure centre with swimming pool and badminton courts. You can walk along the beach or around the coastal path to the pretty seaside town of Aberdovey and walk or cycle some of the paths of the Snowdonia National Park.

Aberdovey's excellent links golf course is a short drive away, and there is sea fishing from the beach or from trips on fishing boats. Talyllyn Railway, is only a short walk from the park.

Glan-Y-Don is a brand new five-star holiday home park only yards from the beach

A spokesman said: "Owning a caravan holiday home or lodge is a life-enhancing experience. Quiet weekends away (and longer breaks) whenever you like, with no need to search and book!

"Your friends, children and grandchildren are sure to want to come and stay in such a delightful location, creating treasured memories together.

"We usually have a selection of quality pre-loved holiday homes and lodges for sale, as well as occasional empty pitches for you to choose and site a new holiday home.

"Today's holiday home build quality, comfort and equipment levels stand comparison with any modern house and the latest holiday lodges are simply luxurious. Finance can be arranged, subject to status, for both new and used caravan holiday homes and lodges and with low interest rates.

"The park is open from March to December every year – so you can really take advantage of your holiday home, whatever the season. We would love to show you around and explain the many benefits of owning a caravan holiday home or lodge."

Get in touch to arrange a visit by calling 01654 710461. Glan-Y-Don is one of nine five-star holiday home parks owned by Salop Caravans (Sites) Ltd. To view their websites please visit www.caravanparksmidwales.co.uk

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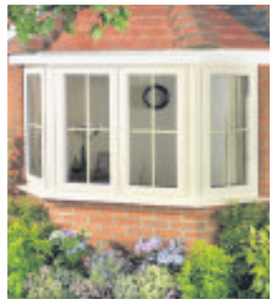

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Potent health benefits of superfood mushrooms

CULTURES around the world have been harnessing the healing powers of the humble mushroom for thousands of years, writes Liz Connor.

They've long been a staple of traditional Chinese medicine, while the pharaohs of Egypt prized mushrooms so highly they decreed only royalty could eat them.

Nobody knows how many types of fleshy fungi exist in nature – there are about 10,000 described species, but mycologists suspect that this is only a fraction of what's out there.

Whether sprinkled on pizza or diced into a bolognese, these fungal organisms are a pretty common part of our western diet, but while you might be au fait with the likes of Portabello, Shiitaki and Chanterelle, there are plenty of medicinal varieties that you perhaps haven't yet heard of.

Here, we've picked out four superfood mushrooms being hailed as quiet achievers in the health and supplement industry, that any health buff worth their kale smoothie should really know about.

1. Lion's Mane

This hairy mushroom gets its peculiar name from its appearance, which bears a resemblance to (yep, you guessed it) a lion's bushy mane. This bearded shroom grows on broad-leaf trees in temperate areas of North America, Europe, and Asia, although it is rare to find in the wild.

So what magical properties does it possesses? "Studies have shown that Lion's Mane mushrooms can help to improve cognitive function and ease symptoms of anxiety and depression," says Emily Hedgman, a spokesperson from Link Nutrition (linknutrition.com). In addition to helping enhance brain function, Hedgman explains that Lion's Mane can also help to support the heart and circulatory system, improve digestive health and reduce inflammation.

2. Chaga

The Chaga mushroom has been slowly gaining popularity in the west for its broad range of life-boosting benefits. It's been used for hundreds of years in Siberia and Asia, where they cut or grind dried Chaga and steep it in hot water, releasing its bioactive compounds into a mild tea. These hardy mushrooms mainly grow on the outside of birch trees in colder climates and have a lumpy exterior that makes them look similar to a piece of charcoal.

"Chaga mushrooms are most impressive for their high antioxidant content whilst also being high in fibre and naturally occurring beta-glucans," says Hedgman. "According to a study published in the World Journal of Gastroenterology, Chaga extract may also be able to prevent liver cancer cell growth – although more research needs to be done."

3. Reishi

This flat fan-shaped mushroom, also known as 'King of the Mushrooms', has been utilised for more than two thousand years in Asia, where its effects were so powerful, it was thought by some to grant immortality.

"Reishi, which is considered to be an adaptogen, is strongly anti-inflammatory and has uses tied to longevity, better immune function, and mental clarity," says Hedgeman. Adaptogens, if you haven't already heard, help us to deal with the negative effects of stress, such as depleted energy levels and various types of hormonal imbalances.

4. Cordyceps

"Cordyceps is an anti-ageing, energy-boosting mushroom found in the Himalayas, that many experts claim can boost aerobic capacity and improve stamina," says Hedgman. These impressive mushrooms are known for their natural ability to fight free radicals, infections, and inflammation.

"Cordyceps have also been used for centuries to reduce symptoms of respiratory disorders, coughs, colds, liver damage and more," she adds.

If you don't fancy popping them in supplement form, Cordyceps have a mild flavour and can be stirred into a variety of dishes including soups, stir-fries and casseroles.

Get creative in the kitchen – both your body and your mind will thank you.

Children should be encourage to look beyond the surface of things

Boredom is often a time when inspiration comes and children start to work things out for themselves

Why it could be good for your child to be bored

By Lisa Salmon

THERE aren't many parents who haven't heard their child utter the immortal phrase "I'm bored".

But instead of desperately scrambling to entertain them, parents should welcome their child's boredom, suggests Lauren Child, the author and illustrator who created the much-loved Charlie and Lola books.

Child believes daydreaming or just staring into space can foster creativity, which is vital for children's development.

"Don't be afraid to allow your child to be bored," she stresses.

"Boredom is often a time when inspiration comes and when children start to work things out for themselves."

Child, the Waterstones Children's Laureate who also gave young readers the Clarice Bean and Ruby Redfort books, has launched a campaign, called Staring Into Space.

Through this, she is urging parents and teachers to foster creative thinking in children by helping them spend some time simply looking, listening, staring into space and making things.

Creative thinking, she says, helps children to problem solve, and understand who they are and how they relate to others and the world.

"It is now widely recognised that creativity is as important as literacy or numeracy, and that allowing ourselves the time, space and freedom to be creative is essential for good mental health. Sometimes we need to stare into space."

Here are her top five suggestions for inspiring creativity.

1. Stop... and think about nothing

Try, with your child, to take 15 minutes every day to put things down - work, laptop, toys - and just think about nothing and allow your mind to clear.

"For me, this is when I get most of my ideas and when thoughts are allowed to collide," explains Child.

Parents should sometimes let kids just stare into space, she says, simply allowing their minds to drift and daydream. "Daydreaming is connected to creativity and allows ideas space to emerge and play."

2. Phones down for everyone!

"We need to try and put our phones down as parents so children can see we're doing this and leaving our phones for a while. The benefit of this is again to have time to clear our minds but also to communicate with people face-to-face.

"Often, we miss kind and everyday interactions with people because we're so busy looking at our devices."

Child suggests everyone in the family tries not to have phones or devices with them at mealtimes so texts or e-mails, however urgent they may seem, aren't interrupting conversations. Instead, the time can be used to share ideas and thoughts.

"How can we persuade ourselves that it's worth the effort to look away? That when we turn our attention wholly away from the device, we will be rewarded?" asks Child.

"I am trying to train myself to put my phone away and out of mind until it's really needed: no idle texting, no calls, no checking Instagram or e-mails, and the camera only to be used when I see something I feel I truly want to keep. In truth, it's hard. But I am convinced it's worth it."

If your child suggests doing something creative, react to them immediately

3. Don't delay creativity

If your child suggests doing something creative, try and react to them immediately. Part of you wants to say ' not now' and 'please don't make a mess', but try to see this as time for bonding and communication.

Child says that if her daughter, Tuesday, wants do some cooking or make something, "I always try to go along with this if we've got the ingredients and the things we need, even if we've only got 10 minutes.

"I think this can make a big difference. As a child, your enthusiasm wanes if someone says, we can do that later or next weekend."

4. Look carefully

Child suggests walking outside, looking at things and discussing them with your child.

"It sounds really obvious, but often we're trying to get somewhere and don't take the time.

"My daughter and I often discuss things we see dropped on the street or we take pictures of buildings and then zoom in on the patterns and go home and try and sketch them."

5. Try making sculptures from toast

Child has worked with arts and crafts teacher Josey Scullard and BookTrust to outline six creative resources , linked to children's books, for children to try. One of these is making toast sculptures, inspired by A World of Your Own by Laura Carlin which encourages readers to look beyond the surface of things and see them in a different way.

Children's Laureate Lauren Child

"So here is a chance to look and think in an upside down, inside out sort of way," Child tells young creators.

"You could lie on the floor and imagine the ceiling as your floor. Look at the small things in your pockets, bags, or on the shelves; what other things could they be? Let your imagination run riot."

As kids' ideas grow, they will be ready to start building their world out of toast – stale, slightly toasted works best.

To create the toast sculptures, first sketch your ideas and then use about four pieces of toast, cut into a smaller sizes if you like, to make walls.

Think beyond the average size and shape of a piece of toast, and try bending it to make curves and twists, or cut it into small pieces for bricks or cladding.

Use pastry cutters or bottle tops to cut windows and doors (they don't have to be square, they can be circles or hearts).

Finally, attach the toast together by pushing cocktail sticks through both pieces, and snip off the ends of the sticks if they're poking out.

Flat pieces could even be stuck together carefully with a little golden syrup.

New award for young champion fundraiser

A CHAMPION fundraiser who has raised more than £17,000 for charities over the years has been awarded the Duncan Edwards Good Citizen Award.

Louis Johnson, aged 11, was surprised with the accolade when he was fundraising for Compton Care at his school's community fun day.

Smestow School pupil Louis was nominated by Lord Jason Guy for his seven years of fundraising, which has seen him raise cash for a number of charities including Compton Care, the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

His proud mother Teresa Johnson, from Tettenhall Wood, said: "It really took Louis by surprise.

"There's only 60 of these awards so he was really happy. He was still in shock the morning after. He's really proud – he said to me he does not do all the fundraising for the awards, all he wants is to make a difference."

This year, Louis was named Young Fundraiser of the Year by the Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity and last year became the first youngster in the West Midlands to receive the British Citizen Youth Award. He has also won an Express & Star Great Big Thank You award.

His next fundraiser will be a craft stall day at the Mount Hotel, in Tettenhall, on August 19 for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Schoolboy Louis Johnson with his Duncan Edwards Good Citizen Award

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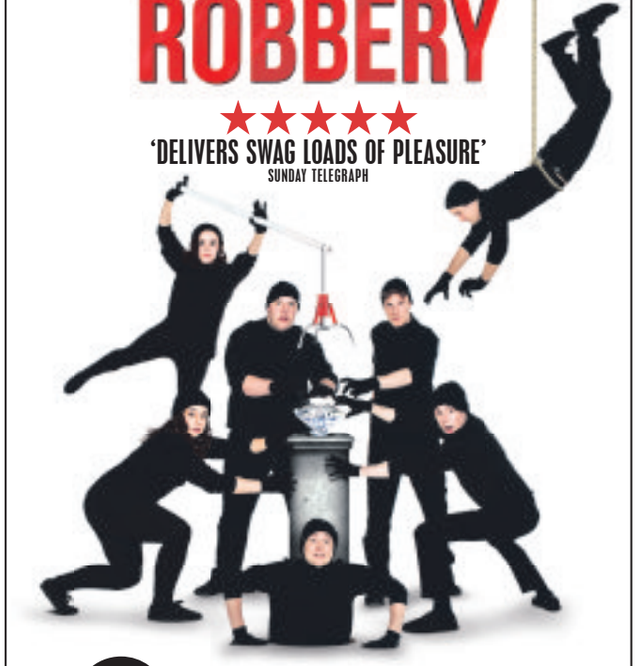

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Top stylist cuts deal to work with college

A COLLEGE has launched a new partnership with an award-winning hairdresser.

Halesowen College will be teaming up with Lee Stafford Education later this year – as the only West Midlands college partnership.

Mr Stafford aims to create the very best training opportunities in the world for would-be hairdressers. With a launch planned for September, the aim is to ensure students are the most employable in the region and that Halesowen College is recognised as 'the place to train'. The college is one of only 12 Lee Stafford Academies in the country and expects to draw hairdressing students from a wide area.

Lee said: "I'm absolutely delighted to be partnering with Halesowen College and really looking forward to working alongside trainers and students."

Thrilled

Jacquie Carman, the college's director of finance and corporate services, added: "We are thrilled to be working with Lee, who has already delivered the most amazing masterclass to our hairdressing students. This is an exciting opportunity for the college and I would encourage budding hairdressers and local employers to get in touch to find out more."

A former Hairdresser of the Year and Barber of the Year, Lee Stafford is well known for his television work. He has appeared on shows like Celebrity Scissorhands and This Morning, and his range of PiNK hair products are sold in 40 countries worldwide.

Students can apply for a place on the hairdressing course by visiting www.halesowen.ac.uk website.

Students Jordan Grieve and Samantha Johnson join celebrity stylist LeeStafford to launch the new Lee Stafford Hairdressing Academy at Halesowen College

Honorary degree for Pc

A POLICE officer who runs an initiative to keep youngsters away from knives, guns and gang crime is set to receive an honorary degree.

Pc Rob Pedley, who is already an MBE, has served with West Midlands Police for more than 23 years. He diverts young people away from violent crime through the Precious Lives project, which has reached more than 200,000 teenagers across the region.

Rob set up the initiative in 2010 after being paralysed in a snowboarding accident. He will receive his honorary degree from Birmingham City University today (Friday).

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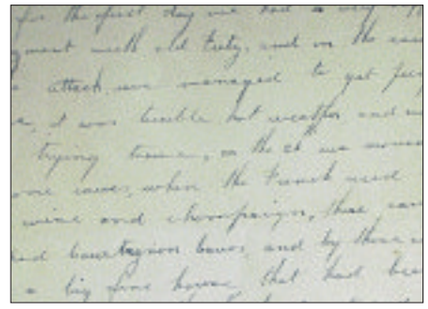
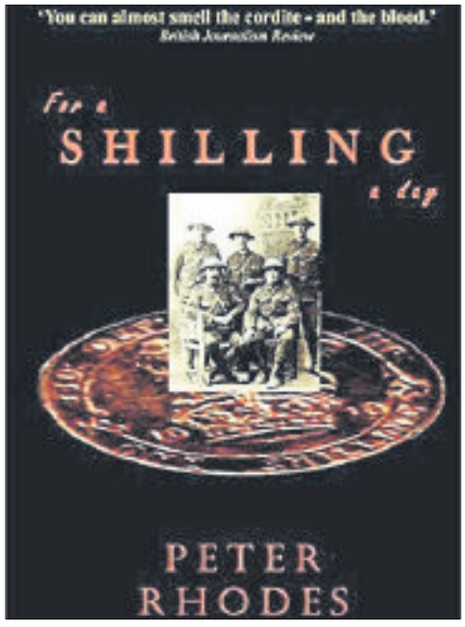


An extract from Pte Smith's diagry

General Berthelot and the ceremonial parade



For a Shilling a Day by Peter Rhodes

Insight on the forgotten battle that changed course of the war

MEMORY LANE

By Pete Rhodes

ON the last day of October 1919 my grandfather, John William Smith, sat down in his joinery shop at Lothersdale in Yorkshire and began writing his diary of the Great War of 1914-18.

He finished it 23 days later – 27 sheets of yellowing notepaper. The final pages tell a Tommy's tale of a battle which is today barely remembered but changed the course of the war.

Grandad had signed up, aged 19, in the first rush of war fever in 1914 but was assigned to a second-line battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment which wasn't even sent to France until 1917.

In July 1918 he was one of 50,000 Tommies suddenly snatched from the British Army's front line in northern France and loaded on to trains heading south.

As he wrote in his diary: "We left at about 6pm and passed through some lovely country and rumours were spreading like lightning. Some said we were going to Italy and some said we were going to Messop (Mesopotamia) but we landed at Reims. We went through Paris, we could see Eiffel Tower quite plain." Grandad was describing the build-up to the Second Battle of the Marne. It was chiefly fought by French, American and Italian troops against the advancing Germans and is a battle barely mentioned in British military history.

And yet some Brits were there, rushed to the Champagne country around Reims where the Germans had made their last great attack of the war. Private Smith's regiment was part of the 62nd (West Riding) Division of about 10,000 men.

The Germans struck hard, on July 15. Within four days, the Italian Corps had lost 9,334 officers and men, nearly one-third of its strength.

The Yorkshire division, fighting alongside the Scots of the 51st (Highland) Division, was rushed straight into battle, passing through the shattered Italian ranks. The German attack was halted and reversed. On July 20 the French commander General Henri Berthelot ordered the counter-attack. As Grandad put it in his diary: "For the first day we had a very stiff engagement with old Fritz and on the second day of the attack we managed to get Jerry on the run."

Grandad, a signaller, described being attacked by German aircraft: "We had a lively night with Jerry bombing planes and he didn't half make stuff fly."

The Second Battle of the Marne was a turning point of the war. From the moment Grandad and his pals climbed out of their trenches and advanced, the British Army never retreated again.

Impressed

They fought like lions around the River Marne. The Allies took 29,367 prisoners, 793 guns and 3,000 machine guns and inflicted 168,000 casualties on the Germans. But in the process about a quarter of the soldiers of the 62nd Division were killed, wounded or missing.

General Berthelot was impressed with his Yorkshire warriors. The Croix de Guerre for gallantry was awarded to the 8th West Yorkshire Regiment (Leeds Rifles) for their tenacious attack and the general ordered a ceremonial parade of the West Riding Division and their Highland comrades.

The Tommies were dog-tired and their equipment was filthy. It was time for a little Yorkshire thrift. Realising the general would see only one side of the parade, the soldiers were ordered to clean only where necessary.

The fighting took place across vineyards. Four months later the British Army was at the gates of Germany. The "war to end wars" was over.

Private John William Smith was not there to see it. He was gassed by a German shell at the end of September 1918 and spent Armistice Day, November 11, temporarily blinded and in hospital. He recovered enough to serve with the British Army of Occupation in Cologne but never regained good health. He died in 1955 aged 60.

* Peter Rhodes, a former Territorial Army officer, is the author of For a Shilling a Day (Bank House Books), a compilation of more than 200 memories of warfare.

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Spectacular – Cirque du Soleil: OVO arrives in Birmingham in October

Dressed for Cirque-cess

We meet the woman behind the fabulous Cirque du Soleil costumes

There's no such thing as a day in the life of Mar Gonzalez Fernandes, the Spanish costumier who manages the wardrobe for Cirque du Soleil. The reason for that is simple – Mar and her four-strong team have no fixed routine. Every day is different. Each day brings new challenges.

The ladies who are charged with making the world's most exciting and most spectacular stage show look like the best looking gig on the planet have to adapt to the daily pressures of life on the road, whether that takes them to Russia, India, South America or the UK.

Cirque du Soleil: OVO will be at Arena Birmingham from October 3 to 7.

But today Mar's in Russia. Soon she'll be in the UK. After that, she'll be in South America. The food is different, the hotels are different, the venues are different and the local workers who wash and mend clothes are also very different.

"We are in on the last few days before a break," she says, in perfect English. "Everybody is really excited."

Mar is part of a permanent team of four and manages the wardrobe for Cirque du Soleil. Her work is supported by two locals in each town or city that the show visits. "We have more than 1,000 pieces of costume travelling with us. It's me and then we have a person dedicated to shoes, one with costumes, one with hats and two local helpers.

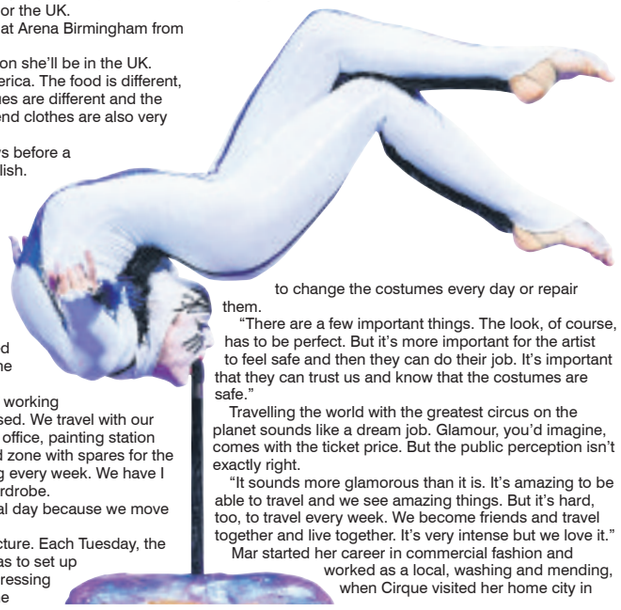
"One of the best things about working with Cirque is that it's so organised. We travel with our own washing machines, dryers, office, painting station for shoes, sewing machines and zone with spares for the hats. We are a little city travelling every week. We have I think three trucks just for the wardrobe.

"It's very hard to have a typical day because we move so much."

But there is some sort of structure. Each Tuesday, the circus rolls into town and Mar has to set up her wardrobe department and dressing rooms. Then she has to wash the costumes and check the shoes and hats. New shows open on Wednesday and Mar has to make sure costumes are sparkly and clean for the crowds. Then she teaches the local helps how to wash and mend after each performance. "It's never boring," she says.

The costumes are designed separately in Montreal and seamstresses in Cirque's head office do most of the work, leaving just the finishing to Mar and her team. "They develop all the fabrics and patterns and all the costumes. Normally, they send the finished costume and we do the final touches."

Costumes get tremendous wear as acrobats strain and stretch to the max. "We give the artists two costumes to use because they have so many shows. We check the costumes every day and normally need to repair them every day. The acrobats do a lot of work and we need to change the costumes every day or repair them.



"There are a few important things. The look, of course, has to be perfect. But it's more important for the artist to feel safe and then they can do their job. It's important that they can trust us and know that the costumes are safe."

Travelling the world with the greatest circus on the planet sounds like a dream job. Glamour, you'd imagine, comes with the ticket price. But the public perception isn't exactly right.

"It sounds more glamorous than it is. It's amazing to be able to travel and we see amazing things. But it's hard, too, to travel every week. We become friends and travel together and live together. It's very intense but we love it."

Mar started her career in commercial fashion and worked as a local, washing and mending, when Cirque visited her home city in Northern Spain. "I did my first work with cirque as a local when I was still in college and I really enjoyed it and had an amazing experience. Then I worked with a few shows as a local when they were in Spain. Then I joined. I was in Birmingham in 2009 and it was a great experience. Then I moved to China with another cirque show. Then I worked in a different company. Now I'm back in Cirque."

She's travelled the world but there are still places she'd like to visit, including Japan and Indonesia. "I'd love to go to both. In Indonesia, there are amazing fabrics and costumes. I like to travel to places where I can learn about traditional costumes and theatres.

Traditional

"I think it's very important for me to keep learning and studying. I go to museums when I get a little downtime to see costumes and fabrics and see traditional art and theatre. It's part of the learning experience to help me grow as a professional."

When Cirque is on stage, Mar is busy backstage. A show day usually runs from noon to midnight. "One of the girls comes in early but the rest of us come in at midday. I oversee the whole operation and make sure everything is ready for the artists. I make all the schedules. We need to make sure all the costumes, hats and shoes are fixed. During the show, we have to be backstage and help the artists get ready and get changed. After the show we have to collect the dirty laundry. We are working midday to midnight."

A typical block of shows includes 13 weeks on the road, followed by two weeks holiday. That gives Mar the chance to return to Spain to see family and friends, or travel elsewhere.

"We're in Russia at the moment and I'm very surprised because I like it a lot. It's beautiful and Moscow was amazing. India is a great country as well and South America in on the list for next year – I was also there a few years ago and I like it a lot. The textiles are great and there's lots of great wildlife.

"Cirque is a remarkable job and I wouldn't change it for a minute."

Andy Richardson

Costume drama – they are made in Montreal

Roll up, roll up – Cirque du Soleil is a real spectacle

The Ticket

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REACH FOR THE STARS AT LUNAR FEST

INSIDE

THEATRE + MUSIC + TV LISTINGS + PUZZLES

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So, whether you're looking for somewhere to meet with family and friends, have a bite to eat, enjoy some live music or challenge yourself with a classic pub quiz, the Samson and Lion has something to offer everyone.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Stars aligning for the Lunar Festival

Goldfrapp, The Stranglers and Basement Jaxx will be among the star attractions when revellers gather at Tanworth In Arden for this weekend's Lunar Festival. The event kicks off today (Thursday) and will continue tomorrow and on Saturday and Sunday.

The headliners will be joined by Amadou and Mariam, Songhoy Blues, The Go! Team, Crazy P, Hookworm, A Guy Called Gerald, Jane Weaver, Boy Azoog, The Unthanks, Blackash, Trojan Sound System, Dam Suzuki, The Pretty Things and Henge.

Mark Radcliffe's Galleon Blast will also feature as will former World Champion snooker star Steve Davis, who reinvented himself as a DJ.

Davis was the most successful professional snooker player of the 1980s, winning a total of 28 major ranking events including six World Championships. In recent years his involvement in snooker has been limited mainly to TV punditry, which has given him far more time to indulge in his musical hobby, namely collecting left-field music from around the globe and presenting a weekly radio show on PhoenixFM and monthly residency on NTS Radio with Kavus Torabi.

ELECTRONICA

His favourite band is Magma and it was well documented that at the end of the 80s he brought them to London for a series of shows. His musical tastes range from quality 70s prog, Canterbury and Zeuhl through to modern day Rock in Opposition and Avant-Progressive and further into left-field electronica and IDM.

A spokesman for the event says fans are in for an exceptional weekend at Lunar. "Above all else Lunar is a music festival and those that have been before will know our line-up is well crafted and eclectic with absolutely no space fillers; 2018 will be no different, expect to see the best in Psychedelia, Electronica, Americana, World/Roots and all sorts of genre-defying but fundamentally great music.

"After the live music finishes on the Lunar Stage, you have a rich choice of high-calibre DJs and audio-visual treats to keep you entertained into the small hours.

"We will also have a number of talks and debates at the festival, aimed at providing different perspectives on life in modern Britain. Topics will include health, the environment, literature, UK culture and more."

Goldfrapp will be among the most popular bands at this weekend's event, with Alison Goldfrapp and Will Gregory playing a greatest hits set. They released their seventh album, Silver Eye, last year, which debuted at number six on the UK chart.

"I think writing an album is like being lost in a wood," says Will Gregory. "You're trying to figure out an interesting path. You don't know whether it's going to be a dead end or somewhere interesting and you never know when to stop because around the corner some beautiful vista might open up."

Alison and Will have been finding new paths through the forest since their 2000 debut album Felt Mountain, never going the same way twice. "We've never liked repeating ourselves," says Alison. "Often we react to things we've just done. We like the spontaneity of not knowing. It's only through the process that we start to figure out what it is. The fans who have stuck with us are the ones who embrace that idea and are excited by the thought that they don't know quite what to expect next."

If 2013's Tales of Us, a set of noirish folk fables, roamed the same pastoral landscape as Felt Mountain and Seventh Tree, then Silver Eye (a reference to the moon) belonged to the pulsing, electronic lineage of Black Cherry and Supernature only deeper and darker.

The common thread between these two modes, apart from the consistently exquisite arrangements and Alison's extraordinary voice, was a set of enduring preoccupations, which informed both the lyrics and the visual aesthetic.

Basement Jaxx are one of the headline acts at Lunar Festival. Below, Goldfrapp

> *After the live music finishes, you have a rich choice of high calibre DJs*

"Mysticism, ecstasy, ritual, contemplation, metamorphosis, the elemental," says Alison, who took all of the photographs and creatively directed all artwork visuals. I've realised that there are things I feel passionate about on a deep level and they were in the record."

Silver Eye features dance music, which evokes a pagan ritual rather than a club soundtrack. Cold, metallic electronics with a hot current of blood running through them. Cinematic pop music with a twist. A celebration of the thirst for transformation and intense sensation. A 21st century moondance. It weaves together the two strands of Goldfrapp's music like never before.

The Stranglers are perennial favourites and were on the road earlier this year with their Definitive Tour.

Audiences can expect to be swept up high on the wave of The Stranglers' powerful sound during what is always an exhilarating live experience; pounding rhythms, soaring melodies, quirky humour and thrillingly daring musicianship will come together again.

Step On with Happy Mondays

Join the 14 hour party people for Shiiine On

Shiiine On, a one-day indie rock and dance festival at Birmingham's Genting Arena next month, will feature more than 30 Britpop, 'Madchester' and post-punk acts.

It will be headlined by dance pioneers Orbital. Renowned for their headline slots at Glastonbury, they will perform their full festival show at the arena.

Indie heroes Shed Seven, who are riding high on the success of their recent top 10 album Instant Pleasures, and Happy Mondays also play the main stage. Shaun Ryder will support himself with a Black Grape set earlier in the day. The main stage will also feature performances by previous headliners of the Shiiine On Weekender, Embrace, who are celebrating a top five album with Love Is A Basic Need, and Cast.

Also playing the main stage at the September 8 event is Glasvegas while on the Forum Live stage there will be a rare festival performance from Julian Cope.

The support cast includes The Wedding Present, Gang Of Four, A Certain Ratio, The Stairs, The Membranes, Psyence, Deja Vega, Smoove & Turrell, Reverend and The Makers, Dreadzone, Bentley Rhythm Ace, Jim Bob, Clint Boon, and young Birmingham band Ivory Wave.

The bands play on five stages from 1 to 11pm and there is a Hacienda party until 3am with Todd Terry, Marshall Jefferson and Jon Dasilva, plus a Northern Soul DJ set from Ocean Colour Scene's Steve Cradock. There is a food village and craft ales. Tickets cost £59.50, see www.shiiineon.com/one-day-festival

Matt is aiming to make you move it!

MATT Terry, winner of 2016's The X Factor is announced to play Alex The Lion in Madagascar – The Musical at selected performances at the New Alexandra Theatre this summer.

The new adaptation of the smash DreamWorks animated motion picture is being staged in Birmingham from Tuesday (July 31) until Saturday (August 4). Matt, pictured, will join the cast for the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday performances.

Since winning the The X Factor, Matt had a top three hit with the Ed Sheeran-penned winner's single When Christmas Comes Around, has released his debut album Trouble with first single from the album, Sucker For You, notching up nearly 60 million streams on Spotify.

Since then Matt featured on Enrique Iglesias's smash single Subeme La Radio alongside Sean Paul.

Matt said: 'I am so excited to be making my acting debut. I can't wait to be playing the lead role of Alex and bringing him to life. Expect incredible costume, set and cast. And the music is immense!"

Alex maybe the king of the urban jungle in New York's Central Park, but he and best friends Marty the zebra, Melman the giraffe and Gloria the hippo, face a challenging time when they escape from blissful captivity with the help of some prodigious penguins, and end up in King Julien's Madagascar.

The new musical features an upbeat score that aims to make you 'Move it, move it'. It is directed by award-winning Kirk Jameson with choreography from Fabian Aloise, design by Tom Rogers and puppet direction from Emma Brunton.

Cinema date with king of the waltz

Superstar violinist André Rieu is coming to a cinema near your when his Maastricht concerts are screened via satellite. The king of the waltz's Amore My Tribute to Love concerts are in André's hometown in the Netherlands, where his Johann Strauss Orchestra will perform. It is screened on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon at the Lighthouse Wolverhampton, plus screenings at Showcase Dudley/W'hampton, Cineworld W'hampton, Light Cinema Walsall and the Odeon Merry Hill.

Wizards go loco for express SVR service

A magical gathering will take place at Severn Valley Railway next month, as it launches its first ever Wizards Express services.

The railway has now added two extra dates to the two already scheduled and has urged those interested to book early to avoid disappointment.

Budding wizards are invited to grab their wands and cloaks to head to the SVR on August 1, 15, 16 and 22 for a magical journey. The services depart from Kidderminster at 11am, 1.40pm and 4.20pm on all four dates. Tickets are £100 for a table of four.

Victoria Carman, marketing and communications manager, said: "This is our first venture into the world of wizardry and we have got a whole cauldron-full of magical fun to be had." To book visit www.svr.co.uk/wizardexpress

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The Island Pool is a classic country pub serving not only a high standard of food but great traditional ales.

A spokesman said: "We have to offer, a carvery with a choice freshly roasted meats accompanied by a wide variety of fresh locally sourced vegetables.

"Alongside our carvery, we have an extensive menu with a range of foods to suit any and every palate. We are proud to offer exquisite beef steaks, also sourced locally, and are all cooked to perfection.

"Sumptuous breakfast, tasty lunch and sexy dinners. Stop by for our varied menu and enjoy our farm to table concept."

The pub is open daily between Sunday and Friday, from 12pm and 8pm and Saturday from 12noon to 9pm.

Breakfast is available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 8.30am and 11am.

The spokesman added: "Whether it's brunch, lunch or dinner you're joining us for, call to reserve your table on (01562) 850311."

Trimpley Heavy Horse Festival
Sunday 29th July 2018, 10.30 - 4.30
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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

The Annual Trimpley Heavy Horse Festival

The annual Trimpley Heavy Horse Festival takes place on Sunday 29th July 2018 at Holbeache Farm, Trimpley, Nr Kidderminster, Worcestershire. This is the home of the Holbeache Stud where Mike Clarke and his daughter Alison breed the very rare Suffolk Punch Heavy Horse.

Mike and his family organize a whole array of activities from Art Exhibitions to Horse and Cart rides, Tractor & trailer rides, donkey rides, fair, dog show, car boot sale, trade stands selling a variety of merchandise and refreshments.

Many of Mike's Suffolks will be housed in the stables where the public can view them easily and you will usually find Mike talking to anyone

who will listen up in the stables, this is where he is in his element, educating and chatting to the public, he is such a natural. The foals will be found in the stables too and these are always such a great crowd puller.

In the working field you will find many of the Horses working, ploughing and muck spreading and there is always a threshing machine working too; it is great to see how these beautiful creatures used to work the land.

All the proceeds from the show are donated to several local charities but the main donation goes to the Suffolk Horse Society.

The show opens at 10.30 and closes at 4.30. Admission £6.00 adults and £4.00 for children and £5.00 for OAP's. (Children under 5 are free). Car Boot is £7.00.

This year's show is on Sunday 29th July 2018. For general enquiries please call Mike on 07831 674018 or for trade stand enquiries please contact Mike's daughter, Tracy, on 07531524280.

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 26, 2018

SATURDAY'S TV JULY 28

CHOICE

Luke Hubbard

Blind Date
(Channel 5, 8pm)
Paul O'Grady hosts another edition of the dating show. Criminologist Luke chooses between drag queens Trampagne from Portsmouth, Ireland's Shyanne O'Shea and Anna Phylactic from Manchester. Plus, glamorous Glaswegian beautician Lauren makes her decision after speaking to her potential suitors - Doncaster best friends Jamie and Steve, and recruitment consultant Max from London.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's Family Favourites. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Wanted Down Under. (R) **2.00** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.45** Garden Rescue. (R) **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.30** Wedding Day Winners. **5.25 Film:** Monsters vs Aliens. (2009) Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon.
6.50 BBC News.
7.00 Regional Programme.
7.10 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman host the general knowledge quiz, in which celebrity guests are challenged to come up with the least likely correct answers to a series of questions posed to members of the public. This time, the famous faces featured may not be so recognisable though, as all the stars are better known for their voiceover work. Brenda Longman, the voice of Sooty's panda friend Soo, teams up with Doctor Who's K-9 John Leeson, while veteran game-show announcer Peter Dickson joins forces with Siri's British male voice Jon Briggs. Hollywood trailer narrator Redd Pepper partners seasoned Big Brother commentator Marcus Bentley, and The Archers' Felicity Finch throws her lot in with co-star Emerald O'Hanrahan. (R)
8.00 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles presents the game show in which complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject. Last in the series.
8.40 Casualty. Alicia decides she wants to put her night with Eddie behind her. Bea offers support, but cannot hide her disappointment when she realises Alicia has not reported it to the police.
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes fears her family is planning to send her to a nursing home, when in fact it is Spartacus the dog who is set to be sent away. Comedy, starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R)
10.00 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.
10.20 Film: Avengers: Age of Ultron. (2015) Sci-fi adventure sequel, with Robert Downey Jr and Chris Hemsworth.
12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.35 BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Marrying Mum and Dad. **7.05** Officially Amazing: Best of the Bunker. **7.35** The Dengineers. (R) **8.05** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **8.35** Deadly Dinosaurs with Steve Backshall. (R) **9.05** David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **9.30** Animal Odd Couples. (R) **10.30** Natural World. (R) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Food & Drink. (R) **12.30** Kew on a Plate. (R) **1.30 Film:** The Man Who Never Was. (1956) **3.10** Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert. (R) **4.10** Flog It! (R) **4.35** Don't Panic! The Dad's Army Story. (R) **5.25** Dad's Army. (R)
6.00 RideLondon: Women's Classique. Jill Douglas introduces coverage of the conclusion to the most lucrative one-day race in women's cycling, with a prize pool of A100,000.
6.50 Proms Extra. Katie Derham is joined by violinist Tai Murray and Gillian Moore, the Director of Music at the Southbank Centre. Plus, the Chord of the Week focuses on Parry's 5th Symphony.
7.30 We're Doomed! The Dad's Army Story. Comedy drama about how Jimmy Perry and David Croft overcame BBC management scepticism and focus groups to get the sitcom Dad's Army on air. Starring Paul Ritter. (R)
8.30 Dad's Army. Mainwaring and Wilson decide to recruit women into the platoon to take care of the less demanding tasks, but the captain loses his heart to an attractive widow. (R)
9.00 Reginald D Hunter's Songs of the Border. Against the backdrop of President Trump's planned construction of a wall between the two countries, the comedian takes a 2,000-mile musical road trip along the US-Mexico border. Postponed from Saturday 14th July.
10.15 QI. Part one of two. Some of the best moments from the Q series, in which host Sandi Toksvig posed regular panellist Alan Davies and guest players a range of perplexing questions.
10.45 Stewart Lee – Content Provider. A performance of the comedian's stand-up show, recorded at the Palace Theatre, Southend-on-Sea in April 2018. Graphic novelist Alan Moore also features.
12.45 Picnic at Hanging Rock. (R) **1.40 Film:** Age of Uprising: The Legend of Michael Kohlhaas. (2013)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. (R) **11.20** James Martin's American Adventure. **11.50** Eat, Shop, Save. (R) **12.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Ascot. Coverage of today's meeting from Ascot. **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** WOS Wrestling.
6.00 ITV News; Weather.
6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.30 Japandemonium. Melvin Odoom narrates a review of the best Japanese TV, showcasing some of the maddest and funniest moments ever broadcast. Featuring a prank show and an ancient Japanese sport.
7.00 Big Star's Little Star. New series. Stephen Mulhern hosts the entertainment show, as children spill the beans about their famous relatives.
8.00 Film: The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. (2012) Unassuming hobbit Bilbo Baggins is pulled out of his comfortable life when Gandalf the wizard volunteers him for a dangerous quest. He joins a party of dwarves who are on a mission to reclaim their lost homeland, which has been taken over by a dragon. When the group journeys into the Misty Mountains, Bilbo becomes separated from the dwarves and falls into a cave, where he finds himself confronted by Gollum and forced to play a riddle game. It is set in Middle-earth 60 years before the events of The Lord of the Rings and is the first part of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, James Nesbitt, Ken Stott, Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm and Christopher Lee.
11.15 ITV News; Weather.
11.35 Play to the Whistle. Holly Willoughby and captains Frank Lampard and Bradley Walsh are joined by golfer Andrew Johnston, Scarlett Moffatt and comic Rob Beckett. Last in the series. (R)
12.35 Jackpot247. **3.00** Eternal Glory. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** The King of Queens. (R) **7.00** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.00** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **5.00** Channel 4 News. **5.30** Formula 1 Hungarian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights.
7.00 A Year in the New Forest. New series. Documentary following a year in the life of the animals and people who call the ancient forest their home. Telling the story of each season as it passes in this rich ecosystem, the series explores a remarkable, precious and traditional way of life. In the New Forest, people and nature must face climate change and the new threats of the 21st century together. As the land cools and the days shorten, the leaves turn golden and one of the great spectacles of the forest begins – the red deer rut.
8.00 My Family and the Galapagos. New series. Monty Halls returns to his "favourite place on Earth" to investigate the wonders and challenges that both define and threaten this jewel of nature.
9.00 Film: Hitman: Agent 47. (2015) Premiere. The latest in a long line of genetically engineered clones bred to be the perfect assassin takes on a mission that strikes close to home. A corporation intends to use the technology that created him to build an army of superhuman killers. As the assassin fights to bring them down, he uncovers the dark secrets surrounding his origin. Action thriller, starring Rupert Friend, Hannah Ware and Zachary Quinto.
10.50 Film: Riddick. (2013) A fugitive left for dead on a dangerous alien world lures bounty hunters to the planet in a plot to escape. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Vin Diesel and Katee Sackhoff.
12.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.45** The Big Narstie Show. (R) **2.40** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. **10.40** Animals Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **11.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.05** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **3.05** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.05** Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords: Disturbing the Peace. (R) **5.05** Rich House, Poor House Changed My Life. (R)
6.05 5 News Weekend.
6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! An episode combining new and unforgettable past cases. The High Court Enforcement Agents head to Manchester to track down over £5,000-worth of debt, and seize an expensive car in the process. Later in south London, the agents deal with a violent debtor who threatens them with a concealed weapon, and in Liverpool, they are met with lies and aggression from a mechanic who owes nearly £3,000. (R)
7.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Stewart and Vic become party to a fractured family's school fee woes in Staffordshire and Del and Dael need to reclaim £3,500 after a rental van was returned badly damaged. (R)
8.00 Blind Date. Paul O'Grady hosts another edition of the dating show. Criminologist Luke chooses between drag queens Trampagne from Portsmouth, Ireland's Shyanne O'Shea and Anna Phylactic from Manchester. Plus, glamorous Glaswegian beautician Lauren makes her decision after speaking to her potential suitors – Doncaster best friends Jamie and Steve, and recruitment consultant Max from London.
9.00 Gino's Win Your Wish List. New series. Gino D'Acampo hosts this game show in which a family of five contestants choose their dream prizes, then in pairs answer questions to try to bank the items on their wish list. In the final round, two players try to secure all the prizes they have won so far – as well as a dream family holiday.
10.00 When Game Shows Go Horribly Wrong. Dale Winton narrates a compilation of disastrous game show moments. (R)
12.55 SuperCasino. **3.10** Eamonn & Ruth: How the Other Half Lives. (R) **4.00** Celebrity 5 Go Caravanning. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Mountain: Life at the Extreme **8.00** Wonders of the Monsoon **9.00** Hidden **10.00** The Summer of Love: How Hippies Changed the World **11.00** Psychedelic Britannia **12.00** Gershwin's Summertime: The Song That Conquered the World **1.00** Mick Jagger – Whistle Test Special: It's Only Rock and Roll **2.00** Mountain: Life at the Extreme **3.00** Wonders of the Monsoon **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.40 Catchphrase **12.25 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **1.25** FYI Daily **1.30 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **2.15 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **3.15** FYI Daily **3.20 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **4.25 Film:** Hotel Transylvania 2 (2015) **5.25** FYI Daily **5.30 Film:** Hotel Transylvania 2 (2015) **6.10** Hotel Transylvania: Puppy! **6.20 Film:** Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (1999) **7.20** FYI Daily **7.25 Film:** Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (1999) **9.00** Love Island: The Weekly Hot List **10.05** Keith Lemon: Coming in America **10.50** Family Guy **12.15** American Dad! **1.10** CelebAbility **1.55** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
2.40 A Touch of Frost **4.55** Agatha Christie's Poirot **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Vera **1.00** Honest **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
4.50 Goals of the 90s **5.00** Storage Wars: Texas **6.00** Monster Carp **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00 Film:** Licence to Kill (1989) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** Licence to Kill (1989) **10.45 Film:** Red Heat (1988) **11.45** FYI Daily **11.50 Film:** Red Heat (1988) **12.55** An Audience with Billy Connolly **2.00** Minder
E4
11.30 The Goldbergs **2.00** The Big Bang Theory **6.55 Film:** X-Men (2000) **9.00 Film:** Warm Bodies (2013) **11.00** Gogglebox **1.05** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **2.15** Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful **3.05** Gogglebox **4.00** Rude Tube **4.25** Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 ParaNorman (2012) **1.00** The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (2015) **2.45** Ice Age (2002) **4.20** Cutthroat Island (1995) **6.40** 27 Dresses (2008) **9.00** X-Men: First Class (2011) **11.35** Evil Dead (2013) **1.30** Magic Mike (2012) **3.45** Close

Star Reader Travel
Hand picked holidays with you in mind

Your Chronicle in association with Just Go! Holidays

FOLKESTONE & FRANCE
Weekend

Departing Friday 21 Sep

This weekend break includes a trip across the Channel to the pretty French seaside town of Boulogne-sur-Mer, with its old town walls, domed cathedral and attractive medieval quarter. There's also the opportunity to visit the cathedral city of Canterbury.

Your break includes
- ✔ Return coach travel and ferry crossings from Dudley & Halesowen
- ✔ 3 nights at the Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone with dinner & breakfast
- ✔ Entertainment some nights
- ✔ Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer

Optional excursion to Canterbury (£8pp)

4 Days by Coach *only* **£149**

SCARBOROUGH
Weekend

Departing Friday 26 Oct

Situated on Yorkshire's coast between two large bays, Scarborough styles itself as the UK's oldest seaside resort and has been welcoming visitors for nearly 400 years. This relaxing weekend break also includes a visit to the charming coastal town of Whitby plus an option to explore the historic city of York.

Your break includes
- ✔ Return coach travel from Dudley, Halesowen & Stourbridge
- ✔ 3 nights at a selected hotel in Scarborough with dinner & breakfast
- ✔ Entertainment some nights
- ✔ Excursion to Whitby

Optional excursion to York (£10pp)

4 Days by Coach *only* **£135**

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

SUNDAY'S TV JULY 29

CHOICE

Barbara Windsor & Jack Douglas

Carry On Forever (ITV, 10.20pm)

Martin Clunes narrates the story of the Carry On series of comedy films, featuring interviews with the stars, rare behind-the-scenes footage and on-set publicity photos. The first episode looks at the origins of the franchise at Pinewood Studios and reveals how producer Peter Rogers and director Gerald Thomas accidentally stumbled on a hit formula. With contributions by Shirley Eaton, Liz Fraser, Rosalind Knight, Bernard Cribbins and Juliet Mills.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Animals Behaving Badly. (R) **2.15** Eat Well for Less? (R) **3.15** Songs of Praise. **3.50** Cycling: RideLondon. Live coverage of the RideLondon-Surrey Classic.

6.30 BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile. The team visits Exmoor, where Matt Baker attends a residential course teaching children outdoor skills and Margherita Taylor goes in search of the UK's most endangered butterfly.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the first of two episodes from the Stormont Parliament Building in Belfast, where items brought in to be valued include diving gear from the Titanic, a first-hand account of Ernest Shackleton's 1914 expedition to the Antarctic, and a walking stick belonging to a far-right propagandist who was executed for treason.

9.00 Poldark. Elizabeth obtains a potion to force an early labour in the hope that George's fears that he is not the father will disappear as soon as the child is born. Ross returns to Cornwall in the aftermath of his duel, hoping to make things right with Demelza, but is forced to consider why he chose to accept Adderley's challenge. George returns home to find Morwenna has come to Trenwith in search of Drake, and banishes her from his estate – prompting Elizabeth to take desperate measures that place the life of her child at risk.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Imagine – Tacita Dean: Looking to See. Profile of the visual artist, visiting her at her studios in Berlin and Los Angeles as she works on a film project inspired by her sister and the Greek myth of Antigone.

11.40 Film: Albert Nobbs. (2011) A woman living in disguise as a man in 19th-century Ireland decides to find a wife after a meeting with a fellow cross-dresser. Drama, with Glenn Close and Mia Wasikowska.

1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **7.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Cycling: RideLondon. **12.00** Triathlon World Series: Edmonton. **1.30** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Natural World. (R) **4.30** Inventing the Impossible: The Big Life Fix. (R) **5.30** Secrets of Silicon Valley. (R)

6.30 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing. In the final episode, Paul and Bob fish for Pike on the River Test in Hampshire, which may not be the best idea for two men of a certain age with heart problems. In the cottage where the pair are staying, they decide to invite a consultant cardiologist for dinner to talk about their medical past and their future, gaining tips on how to live the most healthy life possible. As the sun sets on the final night of their fishing expedition, Paul and Bob decide to write a eulogy for each on the riverbank. Last in the series. (R)

7.00 Inside the Factory. Gregg Wallace explores a Manchester factory that produces 700,000 toilet rolls a day, and Cherry Healey is at Britain's oldest toilet factory, where they turn out 1,000 loos daily. (R)

8.00 Searching for Shergar. The story of one of the world's most valuable racehorses, Shergar, which was famously abducted from its stables in 1983, at the height of the Troubles, and never seen again. Thirty five years on, Alison Millar sets out to see if changed times will help her unearth the mystery once and for all.

9.00 Travels in Trumpland with Ed Balls. New series. The former MP explores America's Deep South to meet the people who voted Donald Trump into power and discover their motivations for supporting him. In the first episode, he visits a festival celebrating Southern culture in Texas and travels south to the controversial border with Mexico, where he witnesses an illegal immigrant being arrested.

10.00 Film: Free State of Jones. (2016) Premiere. American Civil War. Fact-based drama, with Matthew McConaughey and Gugu Mbatha-Raw.

12.15 Idris Elba – King of Speed. (R) **1.15** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Japandemonium. (R) **9.50** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **10.50** WOS Wrestling. (R) **11.50** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **12.50** ITV News; Weather. **12.55** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **2.00** The Chase. (R) **3.00** Tour de France Live. Coverage of the 21st and final stage of the prestigious race.

6.30 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. Paul meets an unusual looking Staffie cross that cannot find an owner, an English bulldog needing surgery to help it breathe and a German shepherd struggling to keep its food down. (R)

7.00 ITV News; Weather.

7.10 Regional Programme; Weather.

7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show in which three contestants guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues, before one of them plays to win £50,000. (R)

8.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Sarah Willingham, Shaun Ryder, Michelle Dewberry and Eddie Edwards pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught. (R)

9.00 Unforgotten. Pete, Chris, James and Tim are interviewed about the time they spent renting a holiday cottage near where Hayley disappeared, and Jamila needs to know more about Chris's past.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Carry On Forever. Martin Clunes narrates the story of the comedy franchise, beginning with a look at its Pinewood Studios origins. (R)

11.20 Sunday Night at the Palladium. Rob Brydon introduces music by Neil Diamond, Paloma Faith and Texas, and comedy from Milton Jones and Daniel Sloss, plus the cast of Jersey Boys and more. Last in the series. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Mobil 1: The Grid. **6.35** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid. (2010) Family comedy, starring Zachary Gordon. **3.15** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.15** Bang on Budget. **5.20** Homes by the Med. (R)

6.20 Channel 4 News.

6.45 Formula 1 Hungarian Grand Prix Highlights. Steve Jones and David Coulthard present action from the Hungaroring in Budapest, where the 12th round of the season took place. Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel took the honours here last season, and will have been looking for another victory to aid him in his closely fought title-race with reigning champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes.

9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. Offred faces a gruelling challenge alone as she recalls her life as a mother, and Serena Joy and the Commander deal with the fallout of their actions.

10.05 The Football Club: Artist in Residence. Portraitist Tai Schierenberg spends a year as West Bromwich Albion FC's artist in residence, but his time with the club coincides with a dramatic turn of fortunes.

11.00 Film: Chef. (2014) A man quits his job at a restaurant and teams up with his ex-wife, his friend and his son to launch a food truck in Miami. Comedy, with Jon Favreau and Robert Downey Jr.

1.10 The Last Leg. Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker are joined by celebrity guests for a comic review of the significant moments of the past seven days. (R) **2.05 Film:** Rams. (2015) Two brothers who have not spoken in years put their differences aside to protect their family's sheep herd. Drama, starring Sigurdur Sigurjonsson and Theodor Juliusson. **3.45** Mobil 1: The Grid. Discussing teamwork with the Red Bull Formula One team. (R) **4.10** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. Three Derby homeowners, with the aid of £1,000 and the host's help, have one week to make their houses appeal to newly married buyers Lou and Steve. (R) **5.05** My Kitchen Rules. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Kittens. (R) **6.40** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.45** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends: Extraordinary Engines. (R) **7.35** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.50** Rusty Rivets. (R) **8.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.20** Pirata & Capitano. **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Floogals. (R) **9.05** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.35** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Chuckle Time with the Chuckle Brothers. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.05 Film:** Nanny McPhee. (2005) **3.05** Access. **3.10 Film:** Nanny McPhee. (2005) Concluded. **4.10 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang. (2010) **5.10** Access. **5.15 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang. (2010) Concluded.

6.15 The Wonderful World of Puppies: Homeward Bound. Rocky the golden retriever moves in with a young family in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, and has to learn to curb his excitement when playing with the children.

7.05 Chuckle Time with the Chuckle Brothers. The comedy duo introduce this new clip-show, featuring the funniest fails, flops and falls uploaded to the internet.

8.00 Funniest Ever Game Show Moments. Ore Oduba presents a selection of memorable moments featuring celebrities appearing on game shows, including Bradley Walsh's struggles with the strangest questions on The Chase.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Film: Face/Off. (1997) Action thriller, with Nicolas Cage and John Travolta.

10.00 5 News Update.

10.05 Film: Face/Off. (1997) Concluded.

11.45 Film: Fight Club. (1999) A disillusioned office worker and his mysterious friend start a club where frustrated men vent their anger in bare-knuckle fighting. Drama, starring Brad Pitt and Edward Norton.

12.45 Access. **12.50 Film:** Fight Club. (1999) Concluded. **2.25** SuperCasino. **4.00** Get Your Tatts Out: Kavos Ink. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms 2018 **8.45** Nature's Weirdest Events **9.00** Archaeology: A Secret History **10.00** Six Wives with Lucy Worsley **11.00** Royal Welsh Show 2018 Highlights **12.00** The Lost Gold of the Highlands: Storyville **1.15** Daniil Trifonov: Piano Sensation **2.15** Archaeology: A Secret History **3.15** Close

ITV2

12.15 Ninja Warrior UK **1.15** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.50 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55 Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **4.25 Film:** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **5.35** FYI Daily **5.40 Film:** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **6.10 Film:** Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002) **9.00** Love Island **10.00** Love Island: Aftersun **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.30** CelebAbility **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.55 A Touch of Frost **1.55** Housewife, 49 **3.55** Rosemary & Thyme **4.55** Foyle's War **6.55** Victoria **9.00** The Halcyon **11.00** Wire in the Blood **1.00** Blue Murder **2.15** Road to Avonlea **3.55** George and Mildred **4.50** Judge Judy **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

6.30 Goodwood Festival of Speed **7.30** Storage Wars: Texas **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Tour de France Highlights **10.00 Film:** Jaws 3 (1983) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** Jaws 3 (1983) **12.05** Better Late Than Never **12.55** BRDC Formula 3 Highlights **2.00** The Motorbike Show **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **12.30** Young Sheldon **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.30 Film:** Rango (2011) **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Bourne Legacy (2012) **11.40** Gogglebox **12.40** The Big Bang Theory **1.35** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **2.35** Rude Tube **3.30** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **1.00** Spirited Away (2001) **3.30** First Daughter (2004) **5.50** Transformers: Dark of the Moon (2011) **9.00** Spy (2015) **11.20** End of Watch (2012) **1.30** Tabu (2012) **3.55** Close

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COSTA DORADA
Salou

Departing Sunday 7 Oct

With beautiful beaches aplenty, where better to take an autumn break away than the picturesque resort of Salou on Spain's Costa Dorada. With temperate weather, this is a wonderful chance to soak up some sun and take in some invigorating fresh air before the winter months begin. Relax on one of the sandy beaches or enjoy the hotels fantastic facilities – it's the perfect place for a getaway!

Your break includes
- ✔ Return flights to Reus from Birmingham (BHX)
- ✔ 1 piece of hold luggage per person & hotel transfers
- ✔ 7 nights at the Hotel Best San Diego, Salou with dinner & breakfast
- ✔ Services of an airport representative on arrival and a resort representative on selected days

A range of optional excursions can be booked in resort at an additional cost

8 Days by Air only £549

COSTA DEL SOL
Winter Sun

Departing Wednesday 7 Nov & 21 Nov

What better way to spend the cooler months of the year than in temperate Spain. As well as warmer climes you'll find beautiful landscapes, excellent beaches and a rich cultural heritage. This break is the perfect opportunity to relax, so why not make use of the hotel's many facilities including an outdoor swimming pool and a games room followed by a stroll along the seafront promenade to take in the stunning views, soak up some sun and enjoy the invigorating, fresh sea air.

Your break includes
- ✔ Return flights to Malaga from Birmingham (BHX)
- ✔ 1 piece of hold luggage per person & hotel transfers
- ✔ 7 nights at the Hotel Las Palmeras, Fuengirola with dinner & breakfast
- ✔ Wine and water with dinner
- ✔ Services of an airport representative on arrival and a local resort representative on selected days

A range of optional excursions can be booked in resort at an additional cost

8 Days by Air only £599

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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Entertainer, BBC2, 12pm
A down-at-heel comedian looks back at his failure both as an entertainer and as a man. John Osborne's drama, with Laurence Olivier. (1960)

TUESDAY
Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, BBC2, 12.05pm
A married American news correspondent reporting on the Korean War from his base in Hong Kong falls in love with a widowed Eurasian doctor - but he is unable to get a divorce and the couple find themselves forced to keep their relationship a secret. Romantic drama based on the memoirs of Han Suyin, with William Holden, Jennifer Jones and Torin Thatcher. (1955)

WEDNESDAY
The Seven Little Foys, BBC2, 12pm
Biopic of popular vaudeville star Eddie Foy, whose life and career fell apart when his wife died young, leaving him to raise seven children on his own. However, love of the limelight proved irresistible and his manager succeeded in persuading him to work the children into his act - despite the protests of his sister-in-law. With Bob Hope, Milly Vitale, George Tobias and a cameo by James Cagney. (1955)

The Break-Up, Friday, ITV, 10.45pm

THURSDAY
I Was Monty's Double, BBC2, 12pm
Fact-based drama about actor and army officer ME Clifton-James, whose remarkable resemblance to General Montgomery saw him selected for a special assignment during the Second World War. He was trained to imitate the general perfectly, and sent on a tour of North Africa to keep the real Montgomery's whereabouts unknown to the enemy. Clifton-James stars as both himself and Monty, alongside John Mills and Cecil Parker. (1958)

FRIDAY
The Break-Up, ITV, 10.45pm
A couple's relationship comes to an end, but neither wants to give up their home, forcing them to carry on living together. Comedy drama, starring Jennifer Aniston, Vince Vaughn, Jon Favreau and Joey Lauren Adams. (2006)

Checking in for a new series with more famous faces

Making TV programmes isn't easy. Everyone wants to create a hit, but how do you do that? Some producers decide to copy a previous show's success, making it just different enough to avoid any trouble.

The brains behind The Real Marigold Hotel did something very smart indeed. They took the premise of the film The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel and tried to find out if British pensioners really could make their pensions stretch further by moving to India.

"BBC Two has a strong track record of creating bold new factual formats and Marigold proved to be an instant break through," says the channel's editor, Patrick Holland. "Who would have thought that a show about retirement would become such a hit with audiences young and old?"

Well, perhaps it's down to the fact that we are, according to statistics, an ageing nation, so the subject matter appeals to more of us – we're either around the same age as the participants or, if we're lucky, we will be one day and want to know want options lay ahead.

The first series saw the celebrities spend three weeks sampling the sights and sounds of Jaipur, capital of the state of Rajasthan in Northern India. They set up home in a haveli – a private mansion – where they had to work out whether they could take care of themselves or need staff to lend a hand.

That run proved to be so popular that the second series moved to BBC One, with a new batch of famous faces setting up home in Kochi; two spin-offs saw celebs from both seasons travelling to Florida, Kyoto, China, Cuba, Iceland and Thailand. Now a third series is upon us.

"We've got a brilliant line up of famous faces checking into The Real Marigold Hotel," says David Clews, director of production company Twofour. "They're a fabulous and funny mix of characters, honest and open about their personal stories, and all of them excited to explore what retirement has to offer in the vibrant and beautiful city of Udaipur.

"We've got our first married couple too, which adds a brand new dynamic. It's going to be the best series yet."

One of the joys of the programme is seeing new friendships form between the participants – and they're certainly a mixed bag this time around.

It's hard to imagine what former newsreader Selina Scott and actors Stephanie Beacham and Susan George will find to say to Ian and Janette Tough, aka The Krankies; they simply come from very different worlds.

But the Toughs will, you would think, bond with fellow comedian Syd Little. He also moves into their idyllic new home on the shores of Lake Pichola alongside ex-EastEnder Peter Dean, former jockey Bob Champion and author Stanley 'father of Boris' Johnson, who knows how celebrity-driven shows work having spent time in I'm a Celebrity… Get Me Out of Here!

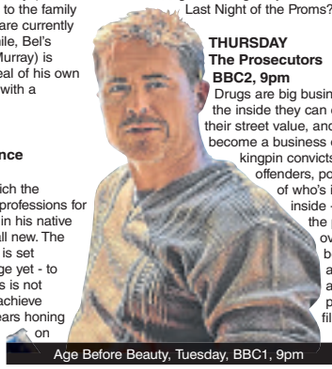
The Real Marigold Hotel, Wednesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Lorry Ladies
BBC1, 7.30pm
Angela Rippon is a trailblazer. Back in the 1970s, she became the first woman to regularly present the news for the BBC. As a result, her fame transcended her day job and she popped up on numerous other programmes, even showing off her previously unknown dance talents to great effect alongside Eric and Ernie on the 1976 Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show. Now she's meeting fellow trailblazers, albeit of a different kind. Female lorry drivers aren't exactly unheard of, but those she interviews during a trip to Northern Ireland have taken the profession to a new level. Here they talk about their passion for the open road and why, after a long week behind the wheel, like nothing better than attending truck festivals across the country.

TUESDAY
Age Before Beauty
BBC1, 9pm
Before she gave us the revamped Poldark, writer Debbie Horsfield scored a hit with the hairdressing drama series Cutting It. Now, she's going back to her roots with the new series Age Before Beauty, which, like its predecessor, is set in a Manchester salon – although it turns out that the beauty industry has moved on a lot since Cutting It's noughties heyday. Hopefully, Bel Finch (Polly Walker) will be able to catch up on the changing trends though. She's suffering from empty-nest syndrome after dropping her teenage kids off at university, so her brother-in-law Teddy (Robson Green) suggest she comes back to the family salon, which the rest of the clan are currently running into the ground. Meanwhile, Bel's joiner husband Wesley (James Murray) is embarking on a new business deal of his own as he comes to an arrangement with a glamorous personal trainer.

WEDNESDAY
Rhod Gilbert's Work Experience
BBC2, 10pm
The eighth run of the show in which the comedian gets to try a variety of professions for size has already been broadcast in his native Wales, but for the rest of us, it's all new. The four-part series begins as Gilbert is set perhaps his most difficult challenge yet - to become a classical musician. This is not something he's going to be able achieve overnight; professionals spend years honing their skills before stepping out on stage. As you may have already guessed, he isn't going to be handed a violin or oboe and told to get on with it. Instead, he learns which instrument (he doesn't play one to any kind of standard) suits him best before receiving lots of help from the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. But will he be good enough to join them on stage during the Last Night of the Proms?


Age Before Beauty, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
The Prosecutors
BBC2, 9pm
Drugs are big business in prisons. On the inside they can can fetch four times their street value, and serving time can become a business opportunity for kingpin convicts. To prosecute the offenders, police need evidence of who's involved on the inside - and who's flying the packages in. Filmed over a year, with behind-the-scenes access to the CPS and West Mercia police, this two-part film follows Senior Crown Prosecutor Eran Cutliffe as she works to build an extraordinarily complex case against a network of people - both inside and outside prisons - who are using drone technology to exploit the captive market. With insights behind the scenes at court, we see how deals are made and the tensions between gang members who are charged together in a conspiracy.

FRIDAY
European Championships 2018
BBC2, 5.15pm
The 11-day celebration of European sport continues with the second day's events Glasgow. The Tollcross International Swimming Centre hosts the semi-finals of the women's 50m freestyle and 100m butterfly, as well as the men's 50m backstroke and 100m breaststroke. The latter should feature Olympic gold-medalist Adam Peaty as he steps up his 'Project 56' bid and aims to become the first swimmer to dip below 57 seconds in the event. Plus, there are finals in the women's 400m IM, featuring Scottish favourite Hannah Miley, and 4x100m freestyle relay, as well as the men's 400m freestyle and 4x100m freestyle relay. Over at the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome, the qualifiers in the men's and women's team sprint and team pursuit take place, before the finals in the team sprints and scratch races.

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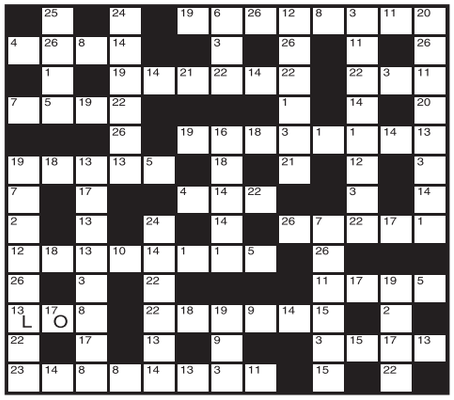
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



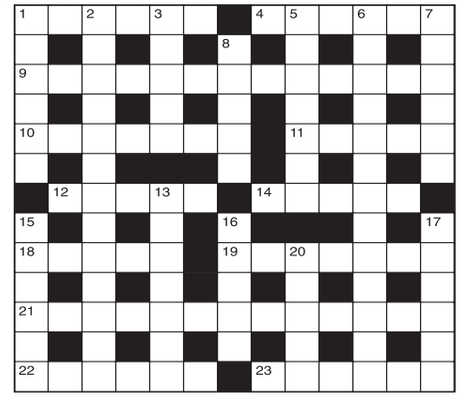
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17 O
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13 L	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	N	O	P	W	U	I	G	D	X	T	S	K
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
F	Z	E	C	R	Q	M	V	H	B	L	Y	J

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues – both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. She introduces wrong male to father (6)
4. Principal paper-fastener (6)
9. Assume an inferior position in order to criticise the driver? (4,1,4,4)
10. Musically illiterate? (7)
11. In this book a picture of an animal (5)
12. Drew back: one inside was uncanny (5)
14. Stick on a very loud number (5)
18. Torso under the ground? (5)
19. Competitor ran into untidy tent (7)
21. Resoluteness in decision making (13)
22. Stolen and taken up (6)
23. Rocks spirit in ship (6)

Down

1. Offended by being expelled (3,3)
2. Fat emmet shook me – exploit it (4,3,4,2)
3. Get to know Labour leader to get a wage (5)
5. Caricature of getting into the air (4-3)
6. Quibbling about charge after private car smash (13)
7. Involve ten in error who are unwell (6)
8. Tough novelist? (5)
13. Start the game again out of shyness? (7)
15. Sounds like headgear to restrain horse for the new wife! (6)
16. Admit 7 upset without article (3,2)
17. Paradoxically spectators may sit here (6)
20. Characteristic skill is up to it (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Taper (6)
4. Outcome (6)
9. Tree-planting (13)
10. Procession (7)
11. Subsequently (5)
12. Pirate (5)
14. A gem (5)
18. Discompose (5)
19. Denial (7)
21. Forethought (13)
22. Tried out (6)
23. Association (6)

Down

1. Opportunity (6)
2. Villainy (13)
3. Big (5)
5. Issue (7)
6. Dull (13)
7. Holding (6)
8. Awry (5)
13. Ultimate (7)
15. Production (6)
16. Corn (5)
17. Dive (6)
20. Skeleton (5)

Sudoku

4					9			7
		3		6		5		1
	7		5		1		4	
9		8						
	2			3	4		9	
				7		4		6
	8		1		6		5	
	6	4		5		7		
2			7			6		8

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	7	3	8	6	9	5	1	4
6	5	9	3	1	4	8	7	2
1	8	4	2	5	7	6	3	9
5	1	7	9	8	3	4	2	6
9	6	2	5	4	1	7	8	3
3	4	8	6	7	2	1	9	5
7	3	5	4	2	8	9	6	1
8	2	6	1	9	5	3	4	7
4	9	1	7	3	6	2	5	8

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Disconsolate; 7 Borer; 8 Abuse; 9 Ill; 10 Publisher; 11 Inward; 12 Rising; 15 Easter day; 17 Air; 18 Llama; 19 Least; 21 Stone-dresser. Down: 1 Dispiritedly; 2 Oar; 3 Scribe; 4 Liability; 5 Touch; 6 Refrigerator; 7 Below; 10 Porcelain; 13 Inapt; 14 Addled; 16 Smart; 20 Ace. QUICK - Across: 1 Crossed wires; 7 Deter; 8 Put on; 9 One; 10 Constrain; 11 Resume; 12 Mellow; 15 Pertinent; 17 War; 18 Exist; 19 Utter; 21 Interference. Down: 1 Cartographer; 2 Set; 3 Daring; 4 Impatient; 5 Extra; 6 Unanswerable; 7 Dress; 10 Committee; 13 Lower; 14 Rebuff; 16 Reign; 20 Tar.

Quiz

1. To which country did Bosnia belong from 1463 to 1878?
2. Which atomic particle is negatively charged?
3. Of which country was Haile Selassie regent, king and finally emperor?
4. In which US state is Dodge City?
5. Which equestrian event's name is French for 'the training of horses'?
6. Who discovered the respiratory effects of laughing gas?
7. Which organs are affected by nephritis?
8. With which form of entertainment is Hal Prince associated?
9. In which city is Madison Square Garden?
10. Whose half-sister is singer Roslyn Kind?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Helios; 2 Bell; 3 Craps; 4 None; 5 Passover; 6 Komodo Dragon; 7 Japan; 8 Cronus; 9 Have a baby; 10 Libretto.

Niner: FLOWERING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

4732387 gives a foreign ruler,
9632 gives a second foreign ruler,
6315 gives a wise man.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Here playing adult is as easy as ABC

RAA RAA! You are! A noisy little lion! Raa Raa! You are! Louder than, them all! In the cubby-buggy – cubby-buggy hear me call!'

This is the song that perpetually goes round and round in my head. It's that or the theme tune to Baby Jake which, if that's the case, means I've been up since before dawn watching the test cards and waiting for CBeebies to start.

Any parent of young kids will understand these are life's truly dark moments. What's worse is that the punishment doesn't end there because for the rest of the day the theme tune to some daft children's programme will do consecutive cartwheels in your head. And while I love having my little girl, sometimes I just want to be an adult again.

LAVISH

If you feel you really can't parent today then ditch the kids (i.e find a responsible adult to look after them for at least a few hours) and take yourself off to Fumo by San Carlo at Selfridges.

Here, with its lavish interior and exclusive Champagne bar, playing adult is as easy as ABC. That's not to say children aren't allowed; it's an Italian restaurant where little ones are welcome with open arms.

Fumo opened in Selfridges last September following a £1 million overhaul. It follows a successful branch of Fumo in Waterloo Street, off St Philips Square, on the other side of the city, while its parent restaurant San Carlo has long been a Brum dining scene stalwart. The space on the top floor of Selfridges used to be The Balcony Bar by Searcys, serving up tasty bites like gourmet burgers and afternoon tea, cocktails and exclusive wines.

However, while The Balcony Bar was very nice, I feel Fumo is a more suitable use of the space, perfect for this high-end department store.

Creamy burrata with Parma ham and rocket

Classy – the renovations have cost £1million

Step through the entrance and arrive in Milan; everything about Fumo feels Italian from the pin-thin sharply-dressed (predominantly Italian) waiters to the ravishing interior resplendent with marble surfaces, dark wood parquet flooring, soft fawn leather chairs and gold accessories.

The menu is centered around Venetian cicchetti – which are medium size dishes, usually shared between friends. Staff recommended we share five or six dishes between two, the only problem being which ones to chose from the extensive menu. As with many places serving little dishes, food arrives from the kitchen when it's ready rather than altogether.

Choices range from pasta dishes to salads and smallish pizzas. There's fish dishes and meat, nibbles and breads. All bases of Italian cuisine are covered, street food, soul food, light bites and more.

Dishes are priced reasonably with most between the £5 to £8 mark. Top of my 'to eat list' was the burrata, that type of mozzarella filled with cream, which here came served with Parma ham and black truffle. Next came the calamari, tender squid pieces in almost-not-there batter. Our table soon filled with exquisite bites. Next a hand-stretched Margherita pizza arrived topped with tomato sauce and mozzarella. It was outstanding.

Due to very full tummies, we did not order dessert. The bill came to £68 including a large bottle of sparkling water and a 10 per cent service charge – a lavish lunch but undoubtedly worth every penny for sublime food and some much-needed adult time.

EMILY BRIDGEWATER

15 Years and Celebrating

Commercial feature

THE Bangla Lounge restaurant is in the heart of Halesowen town centre opposite the church.

The restaurant has been serving quality pan Asian food for the last 15 years.

Originally set up in 2003 by Bari's family the business has gone from strength to strength and this year are celebrating their 15th year anniversary.

As a thank you to all their loyal customers for all their support over the years they are offering 15% discount every Friday & Saturday up to the 11th August and this is both eat in or take away.

Atmosphere and decor

As you enter you are welcomed by magnificent setting and a delightful marriage of classic and luxurious modern – a wonderful comfortable experience.

The menu dishes

The menu offers a wide variety of mouth-watering dishes from red hot Goa to cool Kashmir. On the new 2018 menu, new dishes include South Indian garlic lamb or chicken, Dhabba Murgh, as well as exclusive house specials Tamarind king prawns, chicken makhani and home- made lamb dish. There are plenty of dishes for vegetarians and fish lovers including vegetable jhall, Roson Ki salmon, also any main dish from the menu using Quorn pieces.

Owner and manager Bari Azad is ready to welcome you

The ingredients

All food is made freshly cooked on order and the dishes have the warmth of homemade Indian cooking.

The chefs take great care in selecting the best quality ingredients.

The restaurant also offers a large selection of wines and beer from around the world.

Healthy eating

At Bangla Lounge, healthy eating is high on the agenda if you prefer to have low calorie version of your favourite dishes prepared, they are able to specially prepare most dishes using less oil, no butter or ghee-less food colouring resulting in lighter meals.

If you are planning a celebration, the restaurant's upstairs function room can cater for up to 40 guests is ideal for work parties birthday celebrations anniversaries. Takeaways are available and home delivery service for free within a three-mile radius.

To book a table call **01215857020** or email: **info@banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk**

The restaurant can be found at 67-69 High Street, Halesowen, B63 3BQ.

Rugged new Ford Fiesta Active is an 'exciting lifestyle crossover'

It has the basic design of the latest Fiesta

By Sharon Walters

Ford latest crossover – the Fiesta Active – starts at a price of £17,790 with the jacked-up city car available in three variants – Active 1, Active B&O Play and Active X – and is in the firm's range alongside the Ka+ Active in "offering buyers an exciting lifestyle crossover".

It has the basic design of the latest version of the Fiesta, but all Active models will receive a rugged-look body styling kit, an increased ride height, roof rails, front fog lights and 17-inch alloy wheels as standard.

There's also three selectable drive modes – Eco, Normal and Slippery – along with Hill Start Assist.

Other features included at no extra cost are lane-keep technology, automatic headlights, a heated windscreen and rear privacy glass.

Ford's SYNC 3 infotainment system with Bluetooth connectivity features too, which also supports Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

B&O Play models add more kit and get their name from 10-speaker Bang & Olufsen audio systems that feature, as well as aesthetic tweaks such as a black roof with matching rails.

There's also yellow highlights throughout the cabin, along with additional tech such as cruise control, rain-sensing wipers, illuminated cup holders and

The car features an increased ride height

a 4.2-inch TFT instrument cluster with traffic sign recognition.

Pricing for the B&O Play variants begins at £19,190.

The range-topping Active X brings partial leather upholstery, heated front seats, power-foldable door mirrors with puddle lights, a rear-view camera and parking sensors, as well as the addition of navigation and DAB radio to the SYNC 3 system. It's available from £20,290.

Two engines are on offer for the Fiesta Active.

There's one petrol unit, a three-cylinder, turbocharged 1.0-litre motor that is available in four states of tune – 84bhp, 99bhp, 123bhp and 138bhp.

A diesel option is also available. This is a 1.5-litre engine, developing 84bhp.

No matter the choice of engine, a six-speed manual gearbox features, while auto stop-start technology is included as well.

Orders can now be placed for the new Ford Fiesta Active, with the deliveries expected to follow imminently.

The Active X features partial leather upholstery

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15 Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 VTR+ Silver 33k £10,995
15 Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 VTR+ White 20k £11,495
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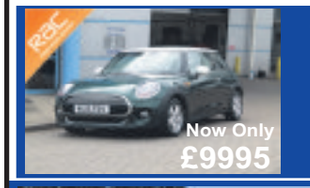

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59 Honda Civic Hatchback 1.4 i-VTEC Type S 3dr Silver 77k £4,495
15 Hyundai IX20 Hatchback 1.6 Active Auto Blue 13k £9,495
15 Hyundai IX35 Diesel 2.0 CRDi SE Nav Auto Black 44k £11,995
59 Mercedes B Class B180 CDI Sport CVT Auto Grey £4,495
15 Mini Hatchback 1.5 Cooper Green 35k £9,995
15 Mitsubishi Asx Estate 1.6 3 Silver 43k £9,795
60 Renault Clio Sport Tourer 1.5 dCi 86 Dynam TomTom Grey 43k £4,295
63 Renault Scenic 1.5 dCi Dynam TomTom Energy Silver 32k £7,995
15 Skoda Fabia Diesel Hatchback 1.4 TDI SE Red 18k £7,995
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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 26, 2018

Toyota C-HR gets new design grade

By James Parker

Toyota's sharply styled C-HR has blazed a trail through the crossover market since its launch in late 2016, speeding its way into the top three of the company's best-selling models in double-quick time. Now its customer appeal is being increased with the introduction of a richly specified new Design grade, additional equipment features, fresh interior treatments and a bold new colour choice.

Cool looks aside, C-HR continues to win favour thanks to its smooth and highly efficient hybrid electric powertrain option – currently the pick of 77 per cent of customers – and its rewarding driving characteristics, derived directly from its TNGA (Toyota New Global Architecture Platform).

There is now a bold new colour choice

Smart

The new C-HR Design comes with an equipment specification that majors on style and on-board comfort and convenience. On the outside, it sports 18-inch alloy wheels, rear privacy glass and auto-folding heated door mirrors with integrated turn indicators. Welcoming entry illumination and ambient cabin lighting are also part of the package, together with smart entry and push-button start.

The front seats both have integrated heaters and power-adjustable lumbar support. The Toyota Touch 2 with Go multimedia system comes with an intuitive central touchscreen control, navigation functions and access to online services.

Front and rear sensors, plus Intelligent Park Assist make for hassle-free manoeuvring into and out of parking spaces.

These features are all in addition to the established Icon trim, which includes a reversing camera, dual-zone automatic air conditioning, an electronic parking brake and the Toyota Safety Sense suite of active safety and driver assistance functions.

For 2018, C-HR Excel models gain full black leather upholstery and rear LED lights. For the Dynamic grade there are new matt black 18-inch alloys, black fabric upholstery and a cool silver trim line on the dashboard. For customers who want to make a stand-out statement with their C-HR, the model can now be specified in vibrant Cyan Blue paintwork; a host of customisation options allows for an even more personalised look, including contrast colours for the side sills, front bumper inserts, lower boot trim, fog light surrounds and door mirror covers.

Design and Dynamic models can be specified with optional leather upholstery and a premium JBL sound system – individually or in a combined pack. The more powerful audio system can also be obtained for the C-HR Excel.

On the outside, it sports 18-inch alloy wheels, rear privacy glass and auto-folding heated door mirrors with integrated turn indicators

The Icon model can be upgraded with a Tech Pack option that includes smart entry, a Blind Spot Monitor, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Lane Departure Alert with steering assist and auto-folding mirrors (for the 1.2T Icon the pack also provides smart entry and push-button start).

The Toyota C-HR is available with a 1.8-litre hybrid electric powertrain, or with a 1.2-litre turbocharged petrol engine. The 1.2T is offered with six-speed manual transmission and front-wheel drive, or continuously variable auto transmission with all-wheel drive; the hybrid version is front-wheel drive only. Combined cycle fuel consumption for the hybrid is 74.3mpg with 86g/km CO2 emissions; for the 1.2T the figures from 42.1mpg and 135g/km respectively.

The new 2018 Toyota C-HR is available to order now. On-the-road prices start at £21,880.

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One millionth Nissan Juke rolls off the production line

Milestone for compact crossover

The one millionth Nissan Juke has been produced at the company's manufacturing site in Sunderland.

The compact crossover has proved immensely popular, and demand remains strong eight years after the car's launch. On average, a new Juke rolls off the Sunderland production line every 105 seconds.

Kevin Fitzpatrick, senior vice-president of manufacturing, supply chain management and purchasing for Nissan Europe, said: "Reaching the one million milestone is a fantastic achievement for any model. "Eight years ago, we had never seen anything like the Juke before – it created an entirely new segment and brought a distinctive never-seen-before look to the market. Fast-forward to today and we have one million customers and Juke remains the segment leader.

"It's terrific to see that the 2018 model, with all its improvements and personalisation options, is as popular as the version that rolled off the line for the first time in 2010."

The Nissan Juke was the second crossover to be built at the Sunderland plant following the Qashqai, and statistics show that during its lifetime black has been the most popular exterior colour option.

A multitude of customisation choices means more than 23,000 Juke possibilities are available for European customers.

In total, 95,000 Jukes were sold across the continent in 2017, while an update was introduced recently to help keep the crossover current.

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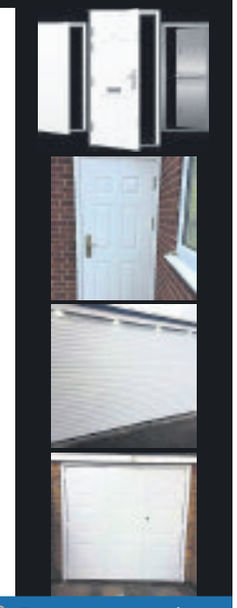

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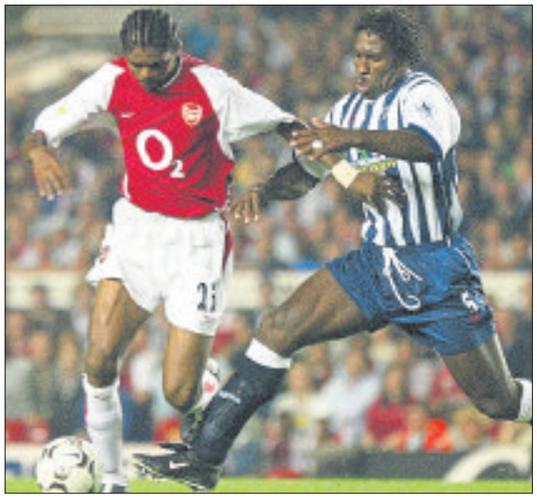

The big Baggies number 5 gets to grips with Arsenal's Kanu in 2002

Darren Moore – taking Albion forward in a new direction

Paul Scholes is challenged during Albion's clash with Man United in 2003

Ex-Portsmouth player Linvoy Primus helped set up a charity with Moore

Cyrille Regis, also a Christian, who would have been part of Darren's team

Darren hopes Albion will have faith in the future

WHEN Darren Moore went back to Fratton Park with Albion as a player, he used to take the unusual measure of meeting up with the opposition players in the kit room before the game.

But this was not a catch-up with former team-mates, it was an opportunity to pray with Portsmouth's flourishing Christian contingent.

A huge, hulking centre-back, Moore was a formidable presence on the pitch, as any striker who competed against him would attest to.

Off the pitch there is still the same determination driving the man forward, but there is also a calming warmth and amiable manner. Moore found Christianity during his time at Bradford City and, since then, faith has played a huge role in his life.

Linvoy Primus was one of those members of the Portsmouth prayer group, and remains close to the Baggies boss to this day.

"There were nine players at Portsmouth who were Christians," Primus said. "Whenever Darren came back with West Brom he would come in and pray.

"It was a unique thing that happened but it was a place where you could get some peace."

Bradford

In 2002, Primus and Moore helped set up the Faith and Football charity with former player Micky Mellows and Primus now offers support to Christians in the game through another charity called Christians In Sport.

Moore's faith has already played a role during his time in charge of the Baggies. Wayne Jacobs, who was his team-mate at Bradford, is a Christian too and one of the reasons Moore turned to the religion.

Jacobs was the unseen member of Moore's coaching staff during his spell as caretaker and Moore is planning to use the man he trusts again next season.

Primus believes Moore's faith will play a huge role in his approach to management. "Darren's been in the industry for a very long time," said Primus. "What you see is what you're going to get. His identity isn't going to be defined by the job he's got, his identity is in the person he follows, which is Christ.

"He's a thoughtful guy anyway and his support for people is going to be number one in that.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Matt Wilson

"Darren's got some really good tools, he'll be hardworking, honest and transparent with the players..."

"The industry of football has got a very quick turnaround in terms of staff, managers and players and it's very hard to build a legacy, but I think Darren will, through his faith, be able to show the value to every single person involved to make going forward as a club successful."

Lee Bradbury was also playing at Portsmouth near the start of the century, and remains close friends with Moore. He is now manager of Havant & Waterlooville, and has just guided them to back-to-back titles that have taken the Hawks into the National League.

The 42-year-old employs a chaplain at his club and believes Moore's faith will support him in the season ahead. "Darren's got some really good tools, he'll be hardworking, honest and transparent with the players," said Bradbury.

"And they know those qualities that he's got are genuine, rather than for an ulterior motive. He'll stay true to himself and his faith will help him along the way. Jesus has helped him get to where he is, so he's more than happy to put his faith in God."

Bradbury came up and stayed with Moore on the weekend of Albion's stunning victory over Tottenham at The Hawthorns towards the end of last season.

At the time, Jake Livermore's 92nd-minute winner kept alive the club's slim hopes of survival.

"The place was buzzing!" recalled Bradbury. "You could feel that the fans wanted him to get the job because of the connection they have for him. They might not have met him, but he's a family man, and he's trying to instil those qualities at the club."

Bradbury expects Moore to employ a club chaplain at Albion in the coming months, and it's something he'd recommend. "Some players don't want to talk to managers, so to have someone who people can trust and speak openly to is really important," he said.

"Everyone's got different faiths, if you can help them be comfortable in the workplace, that's half the battle."

It's not just the players that need that support network. The man himself also needs someone to lean on, even if it looks like nothing would ever topple him. Every six months, Moore meets up with a support network for Christians in football ran by Primus through the Christians in Sport charity.

Depending on availability, the group can range from between half a dozen people to upwards of 30. They meet in hotel foyers, restaurants, and even training grounds, whatever is convenient.

"There's a number of Christian footballers and coaches in the Midlands so we try and get the group together," explained Primus.

"Ultimately, we ask how does God say you should deal with these things?

"Cyrille Regis used to come along as well."

Regis was a Christian too, and used to attend the same large family church as Moore, the Renewal Christian Centre in Solihull.

The legendary Albion striker was Moore's mentor and would have been a part of his team next season had he not passed away so suddenly at the age of 59.

Regis was one of a kind, but Primus hopes that gap on Moore's journey ahead will be filled by others from the church who will offer their support.

"His local church will be part of that support, with that support he will be able to move forward and get through. It's more about the man than the job that he's doing."

Albion's new head coach has a strong affinity to the surrounding community. He grew up playing football in an underpass in Handsworth, and is well aware of the importance of the club to those who follow it.

Sixteen years ago he helped set up Faith and Football with Primus, a community charity aimed at serving local areas in Portsmouth and Handsworth.

"We really wanted to look at the way we serve the community," said Primus. "We knew football would be an easy draw, everyone likes football. I think it's an exciting time for the club. This is what he's wanted to do, he's always wanted to be the manager."

Checkatrade Trophy fate now revealed

WOLVES, Albion and Walsall all learned their Checkatrade Trophy fate after the draw for the group stage was completed.

All 48 League One and League Two clubs were drawn into 16 groups earlier this month.

But the 16 invited clubs from the Premier League and Championship – who will all field under-21 sides – were later added in.

Wolves have been drawn in Group H and will take on Scunthorpe, last season's winners Lincoln City and Mansfield Town.

Albion, who are in Group C, will face Accrington, Blackpool and Macclesfield.

While Walsall – who reached the final of the competition in 2015 – have been placed in Group E alongside Burton, Port Vale and Middlesbrough.

Arsenal, Chelsea, Tottenham and Manchester City are among those to enter teams into the competition this year.

Finch passes Test with flying colours

HIMLEY paceman Adam Finch enhanced his growing reputation by helping to fire England Under-19s to a series victory over South Africa.

The 18-year-old Worcestershire seamer took eight wickets in the second Test as England won by four wickets at the Emirates Riverside to seal a 2-0 triumph,

Wordsley-born Finch, who plays regularly for Himley in the Birmingham League, bagged 4-22 as South Africa, who had a first innings lead of 76, were rolled over for just 90 in their second innings. That impressive burst followed his first innings haul of 4-47.

Finch had also shown his determination with the bat in England's first knock, steadying the innings by digging in to make an unbeaten 16 from 82 balls in 138 minutes.

Finch and his New Road team-mate Jack Haynes, who scored 28 and 27 in the Test, will now join up with England for the one-day series between the two countries.

Malik star turn with impressive batting

MAZEN Malik has started the season in fine style for the Staffordshire Wolves visually impaired cricket team.

Wolves have had a mixed opening with one victory, two draws and a defeat in four clashes. But Malik has been the star turn thanks to some impressive displays with the bat.

Malik and Janaid Mohammed both scored half-centuries while skipper Matt Boulding made 42 as Wolves piled up 199-6 from 26 overs against Herefordshire Bulldogs, who were rolled over in reply for 88.

That was followed by a loss against Lancashire Lions, who made 185-6 before bowling Wolves out for 113. Wolves were forced to hang on for a draw in the return clash with the Bulldogs. Malik top scored with 26 in a total of 79-6 after the Bulldogs had posted 199-3.

Malik then excelled against Wavertree Merseyside at Wolverhampton CC with an unbeaten 89 in Wolves' 180-8. In reply, Wavertree Merseyside ended on 150-4.

Baggies boss Moore: Have faith in future

Page 35

Stour subs steady ship after scare

Stourport Swifts 1 Stourbridge 2

GLASSBOYS claimed their first win of the pre-season build-up with substitutes Rob Thompson-Brown and Paul McCone netting for the visitors after Andy Nicol had been Stourport ahead.

There was a new face in goal with 19-year old keeper Niall Maher on trial having been released by Morecambe, while three of last season's squad – Darryl Westlake, Aaron Forde and Leon Broadhurst – got their first minutes under their belt after missing the games at AFC Wulfrunians and Lye Town.

Stourbridge gradually imposed themselves on the home side, Jake Evans thwarted by a splendid tackle by Rudy Misambo. A minute later a right-wing cross from Luke Benbow just evaded Kaiman Anderson at the far post. Soon afterwards Broadhurst's header was comfortably saved by former Stourbridge youth team keeper Dominic Richards.

Out of the blue Stourport opened the scoring in the 29th minute as the visitors appealed in vain for offside. Nicol fired an angled low shot across Maher and into the far corner of the net.

Glassboys got back on level terms on 38 minutes when Aris Christophorou squared the ball to Thompson-Brown and the summer signing notched his second goal in pre-season with a curling low shot that beat the diving Richards.

Anderson might have made it two in the 41st minute as his low effort went inches past Richards' left-hand upright and on the stroke of half-time Benbow cracked an effort goal-wards that Richards parried away.

On 78 minutes McCone was able to turn the ball over the line from close range.

Himley bowl back from the brink

BROCKHAMPTON missed an opportunity to gain ground on fellow strugglers Himley after they dismissed them for 121 in the Birmingham League division one.

Freddie Cross (4-35) and Jamie McIlroy (3-34) were, chiefly, responsible for Himley's demise but Brockhampton failed to take advantage, slipping to an eight-run defeat after former Brockhampton all-rounder Chris Boroughs took 5-39. Once Ian Bullock (68) was dismissed at 110-9, the game changed in Himley's favour.

Halesowen's resounding 174 run win, at Oswestry moves them up to third place in division two after they amassed an impressive 352-5 at Morda Road.

Stourbridge's lead at the top of the division three table has been trimmed to 13 points after they were held to a winning draw by Milford Hall. A Stour total of 163 all out owed much to 61 from Nathan Crudeli as Stuart Phazey took 4-35 for Milford who held on at 142-9.

Perks and Hampshire ride to the rescue

Ellis Perks with Heathens

BRITISH Under 21 star Ellis Perks makes a return to the Motor Market Heathens after racing for them in 2015 when they spent a full season racing at Perry Barr.

Perks, the nephew of former Heathens rider Dave, steps in for injured skipper Adam Roynon in the winner-takes-all battle on Wednesday, August 1, at Birmingham's Perry Barr track.

And he's joined by former Birmingham rider Taylor Hampshire, who steps in for Chris Widman. Both Widman and Roynon are on the injured list.

Heathens co-boss Gary Patchett said: "We are keen to beat Birmingham and make it through to the National Trophy final and we felt we had to make these moves. Hopefully they won't be just for one meeting!

"We feel so sad for Adam and Chris, two terrific lads, but that's the way speedway goes and we wish them well for their recovery.

"Ellis was very keen to join us and, in fact, he's been in touch in the previous two years expressing a desire to come back to Cradley.

"He will also take his place in the Golden Hammer meeting at Monmore on August 13.

Meanwhile, determined Wolverhampton survived a mid-meeting mini scare to see off Belle Vue 49-41 at Monmore Green as they recorded back-to-back home wins.

NO LIMITS TO PAIR'S SUCCESS

FOUR wins and a second-placed finish out of five rounds – the season could not have started better for the Double Two Racing boys, who stormed to another victory.

Black Country pair Pete Wright and Martyn Siviter have moved up into the Club 600 class in the No Limits endurance series.

The team arrived at Croft full of confidence having won both the Club 600 and National 600 classes during the previous round at Anglesey in Wales. And they showed no signs of any rustiness in Yorkshire as they once again dominated their class to take another comfortable victory.

Wright, from Tividale, said: "Confidence was high as and we always enjoy the quirky, toughness of the fast and flowing Croft circuit."

Temperatures

Friday's test day started with fairly heavy skies and cooler temperatures, and the Track Prep team – which has been doing vital work for Double Two Racing behind the scenes all season – were on hand to set the bike up suitably for the unique surface.

The set up seemed to work as during qualifying, which lasted 45 minutes, both riders went out for a quick lap after two warm-ups, placing the bike first on the grid in class and 13th overall.

Siviter, from Blackheath, started the race and got off to a flyer, entering the first corner in sixth place overall and first in class.

Wright kept the pace going and soon the team was two laps ahead, while Track Prep was busy refuelling Siviter's bike, checking tyre pressure and flipping the rear tyre.

With Siviter sent on his way, he increased the lead to three laps, ensuring could Wright could bring the bike home for a fourth win in five rounds.

Double Two Racing joined sponsors Ange and John Gaskell, of Revs Suspension Services, in Halesowen, earlier this month for a charity golf day at Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club, in south Shropshire.

The day saw individuals and teams compete over 18 holes in aid of the Rainbow Cancer Care Foundation, which supports UK charities such as Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Wright said: "Double Two Racing has supported it for the last two years and this year the charity was celebrating its 10th anniversary. John sponsors our team and I've known him since I was 15 years old. We are always delighted to help out such a worthy cause.

"The team bought along both race bikes, sponsored two holes and auctioned off prizes such as a hospitality day out at one of our races and an amazing chance to see the British Superbike premier finale showdown event at Brands Hatch, donated by our race organisers, No Limits Racing.

"They also donated the use of their private suite with full hospitality on race day.

"We were overwhelmed to make £500 on the day for the foundation and we were also joined on the day by our sponsors, Central Accident and Central Classic Restoration, which supported the team and the charity very generously last year.

"All in all it was a great day and thanks go to everyone who was involved,"

Wright, left, and Siviter congratulate each other after making it four wins out of five

Stand-in Sam added to TV big fight bill

STOURBRIDGE'S Sam Eggington is set to fight in front of a global TV audience after he was added to the undercard for Dillian Whyte's crunch heavyweight clash with Joseph Parker.

The fight, which will take place at The O2 in London on Saturday, is being shown live on Sky Box Office.

Eggington has stepped up at short notice after injury forced Sheffield's Kell Brook to withdraw from his title eliminator with Brandon Cook.

The Black Country fighter, who recently moved up to super-welterweight, admitted he has been presented with an opportunity that is too good to turn down.

"I'm buzzing to get back to the O2 on a massive PPV (pay per view) show," said Eggington. "There was no way I was turning down this fight when they offered it to me.

"Cook likes to come forward and fight so I'm predicting a war, he's going to try and make it a hard night for me.

"He's ranked highly in three governing bodies so getting a win against him would do me wonders.

"Moving up to super-welterweight has given me even more energy to grind down my opponents and do damage late on and I'll be looking to do exactly that next week."

Canadian Cook said: "All of my hard work in the gym isn't going to waste and I'm excited to show the British public what I'm all about. Sam is a tough opponent so I'll need to be at my very best."

Neal cannot wait to get on the grid

STOURBRIDGE racer Matt Neal is looking forward to playing his part in history as he joins the grid for the 60th anniversary weekend of the British Touring Cars Championship.

Snetterton hosts a special triple-header of racing for the big occasion on July 28 and 29. Neal, currently third in the BTCC standings, said: "It is an honour to play a part in another landmark weekend for the BTCC as a Honda driver. While qualifying and race one will certainly be a challenge given the success ballast we'll be carrying, the recent test demonstrated the Civic Type R is in its element at Snetterton."

★★★

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